

# STANDARDS FOR STATISTICS ON THE FAMILY



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# **STANDARDS FOR STATISTICS ON THE FAMILY**

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**AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS**

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## Preface

An important objective of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is to develop and promote the use of statistical standards to help ensure the compatibility and comparability of data derived from different statistical sources and systems.

As part of its commitment to this objective, the ABS is developing a series of papers which present standards for the collection, processing and dissemination of core variables in social, labour and demographic statistics. This publication presents standards for four variables associated with the family - Relationship in Household, Family Type, Household Type and Marital Status and includes recommended definitions of the concepts, classification and code structures, and standard output categories associated with each of these variables. Information is also provided on the relationship questions which can be included in statistical collections to enable data on all four of these family variables to be collected in a standard way.

A period of time for consultation and debate about whether the standards we have developed should have the status of *national standards* is needed - at present they are ABS standards, to be used in all relevant ABS collections. To facilitate this, standards for the family have been published in this document, and other publications in the series on standards for social variables have been released or are intended for release in the future. These publications will allow government, academic and private sector organisations to implement the standards in their own collections and to provide feedback on their usefulness.

Following the extensive community debate during the International Year of the Family on the nature of families in Australia, these standards will provide a platform for the development of a coherent national set of data, to further inform community discussion on family issues.

The ABS intends to keep the standards up to date, not only for its own use but to keep faith with those who take them up as national standards. This is an important aspect of the ABS's statistical co-ordination role as the national statistical agency which will mean ongoing liaison with users of the standards and of the resultant statistics.

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## Overview of Family Variables

### Introduction

As part of a process of review and development of ABS standards for social and labour statistics, the ABS has developed a comprehensive set of standards for statistics on the family. The broad purpose of these standards is to provide an accurate statistical picture of the structures of families in society, so that debates related to social policy and social support are able to draw on objective evidence about families, taken from a range of statistical sources. The standards are underpinned, therefore, by a consistently defined concept of the family, which is sufficiently all embracing to inform such debate and sufficiently robust to be useful in a variety of statistical applications.

The development, adoption and promotion of statistical standards are fundamental to providing a high quality and dynamic statistical service. The ABS has a commitment to develop and promote the use of statistical standards to facilitate the comparability and compatibility of data derived from different statistical sources and systems. This is not just an interesting intellectual exercise or statistical nicety. It has a very practical application whenever an analytical purpose requires data from different sources to be brought to bear on an issue or problem. For instance, analysts concerned with the issue of paid work and family responsibilities will have an interest in factors such as family income, the labour force status of parents, and types of child care used. They may require detailed information on these topics from several separate surveys to be incorporated into their analyses and, reasonably, they might expect that the sources will be consistent in their application of concepts such as family type.

The ABS is aware of ever increasing requirements for data to support this kind of analysis. Key issues identified by the National Council for the International Year of the Family include the diversity of families, the value of caring in families, the value of unpaid household work, the combination of paid work and family responsibilities, the way in which men and women share family responsibilities, the needs of disadvantaged families, and the importance of secure and affordable housing for families.

### **The concept of the family**

The concept of the family, which has been the subject of considerable public debate during the International Year of the Family, is something that the ABS needs to consider in the context of statistical collection arrangements and is central to the standards presented in this publication. In devising its definition of the family, the ABS has recognised that, generally speaking, notions of what constitutes a family vary considerably. Some people consider their family to be the relatives with whom they live. Others extend their definition of family to include relatives who live in other dwellings. For some, the notion of family includes people who are unrelated.

One element of this debate that has received much publicity, has been concerned with whether a same-sex couple relationship should be regarded as the basis for the formation of a family. The ABS seeks to make no judgements in debates about social and moral values which have frequently been the focus of interest in this matter. What the ABS does seek to do is to provide an accurate statistical picture of the structures of society so that such debates, as well as those related to social policy and social support, are able to draw on objective evidence. Until recently the ABS has ignored information that identified persons of the same sex as being in a marriage-like relationship. One outcome of the review of ABS standards for family statistics has been the decision to change that approach.

This decision is consistent with the recommendations, in relation to the diversity of Australian families, of the National Council for the International Year of the Family in its final report *Creating the Links: Families and Social Responsibility* (1994):

*that the caring responsibilities carried out by all Australians (regardless of their sexual preference) in respect of care for children, aged family members, a sick or disabled family member or partner, be viewed in policy terms as equivalent, and treated as such in all policies concerned with supporting caring responsibilities. (p22)*

In the statistical context, it is necessary to have a clear and comprehensive definition of a family which takes into consideration the range of analytical uses to which statistics about the family will ultimately be put, as well as the practicalities of collecting the data using established systematic procedures. Inherently this involves narrowing the definition of the family unit and restricting who is considered a family member.

For statistical purposes *family* is thus defined as:

*two or more persons, one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering, and who are usually resident in the same household. The basis of a family is formed by identifying the presence of a couple relationship, lone parent-child relationship or other blood relationship. Some households will, therefore, contain more than one family.*

Although the majority of households in Australia are single family households, this definition has been written to encompass households which contain more than one family. For a full discussion of the way in which this definition is used to form families in the Relationship in Household and Family Type standards see, the Rules for identifying and coding families in Chapter 4 - *Standards for Statistics on Family Type*, pp 43-47.

The definition of a family applies an age limit of 15 years and over for the practical reason that ABS surveys only collect family data where at least one adult family member (considered to be 15 years of age or older) can be identified. The definition also restricts the concept of a family to those usually resident in the same household for the practical reason that most ABS social surveys are based on the household. A concept of family which extended beyond the household would necessarily allow some individuals to be included in more than one family. In addition to leading to double counting of particular individuals in statistical collections, failure to apply such an explicit boundary to the concept would make it impossible to measure the number and characteristics of families in a consistent and meaningful way.

It should be mentioned that although, for statistical and classificatory reasons, the definition of a family is constrained to a household, the ABS does produce statistics about wider family networks in special purpose statistical collections such as the Survey of Families in Australia, 1992. Many aspects of family life are not confined to those who live as part of one household. A major emphasis of the Family Survey is on the ways in which members of family networks, who live in different households, give and receive support, thus making it possible to

examine areas of support which are applicable to both the household family and the extended family network.

The household family, as described in this publication, is the standard for all ABS social surveys. The data on extra-household relationships collected in the Survey of Families in Australia, 1992, did not impact on the coding, classification and dissemination of statistics about the household family. Thus, it is true to say that a person is not considered a member of a particular family if he or she usually lives in another household, or is an unrelated individual over 15 years of age living in the same household (eg friend, boarder, housekeeper). Of course, the converse is true that unrelated individuals under 15 years of age are treated as family members.

Non-family members over 15 years of age living with a family household (such as boarders) are classified as part of a family household for the purposes of Household Type, but are not classified as part of the family for Family Type coding. For further information see the Household Type classification on page 70.

Often the concepts of both *family* and *household* refer to the same set of people when applied to a particular dwelling. This is because the *family* is a subset of the *household* by definition and, in Australian society, it is frequently the case that a *household* comprises a single *family*. The *family* and the *household* are two distinct concepts, however, and do not comprise identical populations. Persons who live alone, live in group households, or share a household with a family to which they are unrelated are members of households, but not members of families according to our statistical definitions. Furthermore, a household may be comprised of two (or more) families.

## **Core variables describing family structure**

The four main variables which are used in describing family structure within a household are Relationship in Household, Family Type, Household Type, and Marital Status.

**Relationship in Household** is a characteristic of each individual living in a household and is used to determine the familial and non-familial relationships between these individuals. This concept is central to the application of statistical standards on the family and the household because relationships within a household provide the key for identifying families, their type and the number of families that are in the household.

**Family Type** differentiates families based on the presence or absence of couple relationships, parent-child relationships, child dependency



relationships or other blood relationships. At the highest level of the classification the four family types are:

- couple family with children
- couple family without children
- one parent family
- other family.

A second level of detail introduces the concept of child dependency to provide more detail of family type within couple and one parent families. A further level of detail distinguishes dependent students aged 15 or more from other dependent children for these family types. At the most detailed level the existence of other relatives is identified in each category of couple and one parent families. Further provision has been made for separate identification, where required, of opposite sex and same sex couples within couple families.

**Household Type** is used to identify family households, the number of families in a household, the presence of non-family members in family households, and the type of non-family households. The latter category provides for the identification of lone person households and group households.

The standards for **Marital Status** specify two distinct variables: *Registered Marital Status* and *Social Marital Status*, with the latter recommended for most applications. This is in accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations.

Traditionally *Registered Marital Status* (which categorises people as Never Married, Widowed, Divorced, Separated and Married) has been used in most applications. However, with the increase in the number of de facto marriages the concept has become less useful to identify couple relationships. As *Social Marital Status* provides a category for de facto marriages, and classifies people according to their usual living arrangements rather than their registered marital status, the concept can be used to identify couple relationships within a household through the use of one of the standard sets of questions used to identify relationships.

A person's social marital status is determined by whether or not they form a consensual union with another person and the nature of that union, regardless of their registered marital status. The classification structure has, at its highest level, categories married and not married. Within married, are separate categories for registered and de facto marriage. Within de facto marriage, at the next level of detail, there is a distinction between opposite sex and same sex couples. These are further divided at the next level of detail into male and female

same sex couples. Although the classification contains this detail, it is unlikely that information will usually be published at this level. The dissemination of data at the most detailed level (especially the distinction between opposite sex and same-sex couples) will depend upon the willingness of people to identify themselves in these categories and upon the sample size of the collection.

As these variables are all designed to produce and present information about families and households, they are closely associated through the common approach to data collection and a common set of underlying concepts. In particular, data on Relationship in Household, Family Type, Household Type and Social Marital Status, are obtained from a common set of relationship questionnaire modules. These modules are presented in Chapter 2 - *Relationship Questionnaire Modules for Family Variables*.

The standards for each of the four core variables presented in the subsequent chapters provide comprehensive information on both conceptual issues and practical issues relating to data collection and processing. Each of the chapters includes a description of the name of the concept, its definition, the classification criteria, the classification and code structures, a discussion of conceptual issues, a standard questionnaire module, and output classifications for the presentation of data. This format provides a standard way of dealing with each concept in any statistical collection.

## **Definitions of common concepts**

A number of concepts are common to most of the variables covered in this publication. In addition to the family, which is discussed above, these concepts include:

- household
- household and family reference persons
- usual residency
- couple relationship
- child

### **Household**

The *household* as a concept, or an entity in the collection methodology, is associated with all four of the family variables. It has a fundamental quality in

that it underpins the collection and dissemination of statistics on families and households. In the ABS a *household* is broadly defined as:

*a group of two or more related or unrelated people who usually reside in the same dwelling, who regard themselves as a household, and who make common provision for food or other essentials for living; or a person living in a dwelling who makes provision for his or her own food and other essentials for living, without combining with any other person.*

Most dwellings in Australia contain only one household. However, there are a number of situations where dwellings are considered to contain more than one household. In order to determine the number of households in a dwelling the following criteria can be used in order of priority:

- whether the individuals regard themselves as a single household or consider they form separate households. Under this criterion, if a family is present then they form a single household, as it is accepted that if individuals are members of the same family they will regard themselves as members of the same household. Furthermore, if one dwelling contains two (or more) families and the families regard themselves as comprising the same household, then they form a single multifamily household. However, if they regard themselves as separate households, then two (or more) households are formed;
- whether payment is received from a boarder or lodger for accommodation/rent, bills and other essentials of living, whether these costs are shared amongst all the individuals, or whether individuals make their own arrangements; and
- whether regular provision is made for groups or individuals to take meals separately, that is, at different times or in different rooms. Thus lodgers, who pay for accommodation only (not meals), are treated as a separate household; and boarders, who receive accommodation and meals (board), are not treated as a separate household.

### Household and family reference persons

The concepts of *household* and *family* facilitate the identification of a *household reference person* and *family reference person(s)* who are used as the basis for determining the relationships between the usual residents of the household.

The *household reference person* is a household member whose relationship with all other members of the household may be described in terms which identify the composition of the household and are meaningful to family formation. The

relationship between each individual and the household reference person is also a means of identifying relationships between other members of the household, in order to further clarify household and family composition.

A *family reference person* is a household member who forms a family with other members of the household. The identification of *family reference persons* is used to determine the relationships between other family members. As such, the person who is identified as the family reference person needs to be the person to whom relationships with all other family members can best be described. It has another purpose, which is that in households which contain more than one family, a *family reference person* is identified for each family. This allows each family living in a common household to be treated as a separate entity.

As a *family reference person* needs to be identified for each family in a multifamily household, there must be a separate variable associated with each person in the household indicating to which family that person belongs. This variable is referred to as the *family number*. See Family number classification and code structure in Chapter 3 - *Standards for Statistics on Relationship in Household*, p36.

Although the primary use of the concepts of *household* and *family reference persons* is in coding and processing data, the concepts may also be used to form output variables. This occurs when characteristics of the reference person are used as indicators of characteristics of the household. For example, occupation or qualifications of the reference person may be used as an indicator of the socio-economic status of the family or household. Accordingly, it is necessary to have a set of criteria for determining the reference person who is appropriate for such purposes.

In a single family household, the *household reference person* and the *family reference person* are the same person. A standard hierarchic set of criteria is used to choose the most appropriate household member as the *household reference person*.

In multifamily households, where family coding is complicated, a more detailed procedure is needed to determine the appropriate reference persons. Once the household members have been allocated to families, the responses provided on the collection form are further processed so that a reference person is chosen for each family. The rules for determining families in multifamily households are explained in the section on Rules for identifying and coding families in Chapter 4 - *Standards for Statistics on Family Type*, pp 43-47.

To select each *family reference person* hierarchic selection criteria are applied to each family from the top down. Then one of the *family reference persons* is also designated as the *household reference person*. To select the *household reference person* a further set of hierarchical criteria are applied to the *family reference persons*. For

further details of the criteria used see the discussion Identifying household and family reference persons in Chapter 2 - *Relationship Questionnaire Modules for Family Variables*, pp 14-17.

### Usual residency

The concept of *usual residency* is used to constrain the description of relationships, family type, household type and social marital status to people who *usually reside* with a particular household. Persons who are *temporarily* residing with a household during the survey period and are usual residents of another household are considered to be visitors.

Standards for statistics on usual residency are currently being developed. These standards will seek to make the definition of a usual resident the same across all ABS collections. In the interim period the ABS recommends the following definition of a usual resident:

*a person who usually has lived or intends to live with the household for a total of six months or more and regards it as his or her own, or main, household; or a person who has no usual place of residence and is staying with the household during the reference period of the collection.*

### Couple relationship

The concept of *couple relationship* is common to all family related variables. This concept is based on the notion of a *consensual union* which is deemed to exist when:

- two people are usually resident in the same household;
- a social, economic and emotional bonding, usually associated with marriage, exists between the partners; and
- the partners consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union.

In most statistical collections it is not practical to ask questions which will determine whether bonding usually associated with marriage exists between two people. Accordingly, two individuals are regarded as a couple if both are reported as being usually resident in the same household and living together in either a *de facto* or registered marriage. The formalisation of these living arrangements through a ceremony is not necessary.

In practice, a consensual union is deemed to exist when the relationship between two people usually resident in the same household is reported as: *husband, wife, spouse, partner, de facto, common law husband/wife/spouse, lover, boyfriend, girlfriend*. Any relationship label which indicates that a consensual union exists is accepted by the interviewers, unless the relationship is further qualified by the respondent to indicate that he or she does **not** consider that a couple relationship has been formed. For example, the respondent may indicate that a person is their *boyfriend* and then go on to say 'but, we aren't *de factos*', in which case the individuals would be treated as unrelated to each other. The word *friend* on its own is not sufficient evidence that a consensual union exists. Thus, the definition of a couple relationship is as follows:

*a couple relationship is based on a consensual union, and is defined as two people usually residing in the same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond usually associated with marriage and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union. This relationship is identified by the presence of a registered marriage or de facto marriage.*

The restriction of couple relationships (and thus consensual unions) to usual residents in a household is a necessary practical consideration for conducting household-based surveys. Therefore, a marriage or partnership between a person usually resident in a household and a person who is a usual resident of another household (a *visitor*) is not recognised in the standards for Relationship in Household, Family Type, Household Type or Social Marital Status. However, Registered Marital Status extends to all persons, regardless of their place of usual residence.

## Child

In these standards the definition of a child is primarily a function of an individual's relationship to other household members, regardless of age. All persons under 15 years of age are defined as children, however. The identification and classification of children into different types is based on reported relationships and the presence of dependency relationships. It is through the dependency relationships that the definition of a child is broadened beyond the relationship of a natural, adopted, step or foster son or daughter to include otherwise related and unrelated individuals.

The definition of a child is:

*A person of any age who is a natural, adopted, step, or foster son or daughter of a couple or lone parent, usually resident in the same household. A child is also any individual under 15, usually resident in the household, who forms a parent-child relationship with another member of the household. This includes otherwise related children under 15 and unrelated children under 15.*

*In order to be classified as a child, the person can have no partner or child of his or her own usually resident in the household.*

There are three types of child identified in the Relationship in Household classification:

- Child under 15
- Dependent student
- Non-dependent child

The differentiation of children into these three types is based upon the dependency criterion and is designed to identify families with different structures and needs. Dependency as used in these classifications refers to economic dependency and is applied only to the population of people who could be described as 'children'. It is thus not intended to measure an aged person's dependency nor a disabled person's.

Dependency is assumed to exist when an individual living in a family household is likely to be unable to support himself or herself financially and is thus reliant upon another usually resident individual(s) for the provision of his or her financial needs (meals, accommodation, other expenses). As indicators of economic dependency two barriers to full-time employment have been chosen: age and student status.

The dependency criterion is applied to two groups of people in slightly different ways: *children under 15* and *dependent students*. The reason for applying it to children under the age of 15 is that persons of this age are not legally able to work full-time and thus cannot support themselves. This criterion applies not only to natural children but equally to nephews, nieces, cousins and unrelated children who live with a family.

The concept of dependency is further applied to another group of people, those 15-24 years old and studying full-time, who are also assumed to be unable to support themselves financially since, by virtue of their student status, they are

generally unable to work enough hours to fully support themselves. In this instance, the dependency criterion is not as widely applied as it is to the *children under 15* in that unrelated people who live with a family, and otherwise related family members such as nieces, nephews, cousins etc. who are studying full-time, are assumed to be receiving support from outside the family. Thus only natural, adopted, step, and foster children are defined as dependent students.

As children over the age of 15, who are not studying full-time, are in a position to be employed full-time, such children are classified as non-dependent children.

## **Procedures for processing family variables**

In a statistical collection designed to produce information about families, the following steps need to take place in order to process data about families. These steps include the:

- identification of the usual residents of the household;
- description of the relationships between the usual residents, by use of an initial household reference person;
- application of the rules for forming families (see the rules for identifying and coding families in Chapter 4 - *Standards for Statistics on Family Type*, pp 43-47). At this stage, it may also be necessary to reallocate the household and family reference person(s) depending upon the complexity of the household (for further details see the discussion of household and family reference persons in this chapter and the discussion on identifying household and family reference persons in Chapter 2 - *Relationship Questionnaire Modules for Family Variables*, pp 14-17); and finally,
- coding of Relationship in Household, Family Type and other variables, as required.

The following chapters provide the standards that underpin this statistical process.



## Relationship Questionnaire Modules for Family Variables

### Introduction

This chapter outlines the procedures that need to be undertaken to collect information about relationships in a household. The data that is collected in the relationship question is used to create the Relationship in Household, Family Type, Household Type and Social Marital Status variables. The process, as discussed in this chapter, involves the identification of a household reference person, which under certain circumstances will need to be modified later, and a relationship question which is asked of all the usual residents of a household.

As collection methodologies vary, three alternative questionnaire modules are presented to cover both interviewer-based collections and self-enumerated collections. The essential features of each alternative are outlined, as well as the features common to all the alternatives. The first questionnaire module is a column format suitable for interview-based collections. The second and third modules are for self-enumeration collections. The third module has been developed to collect slightly more detailed information than the second module. It is designed to collect supplementary relationship information which allows refinement of the precision of family coding. Although some testing has been carried out by the ABS during development of the module, the version that is presented here has not been implemented yet. It is, therefore, not yet recommended as a standard but instead is provided as an example of the kind of questioning which can be done in self-enumerated collections to elicit complex relationship details.

The discussion detailing the interview-based module is the most complex; covering the identification of usual residents, the scope and coverage issues, the standard relationship question and the circumstances under which relationships are clarified by further questions.

In deciding which module is appropriate for a particular collection, the collection methodology, resource availability and quality of data required should be considered. Although alternative 1 and 2 of the questionnaire modules presented in this chapter are proposed as standard modules, the wording of the questions may need to be modified slightly to suit particular collection requirements and collection methodology. Whilst the ABS will continue to develop these modules, any comments from users about their own questionnaire experience would be welcomed.

### Identifying household and family reference persons

To collect relationship in household data a *household reference person* must first be identified. Family formation, household type and relationships in the household are formed through taking one person and then describing each other person's relationship to that person. This provides a means of identifying and describing the relationships between other members of the household.

A *family reference person* is a household member who forms a family with other members of the household. In a single family household, the *household reference person* and the *family reference person* are the same person. In multifamily households there is a *family reference person* for each family and then one of the family reference persons is also designated as a *household reference person*. Once household and family reference persons have been identified, relationships within the household can be coded by establishing the relationship between the reference person(s) and each other member of the household.

There is a standard set of criteria for identifying the household and family reference person(s), however, the practical application of these criteria may not always be straightforward at the collection phase of a statistical collection. In order to describe relationships in terms of the reference person, that person must be identified before other relationships can be recorded. However, respondents are not usually familiar with the abstract notion of *reference person*, and the interviewer cannot choose a suitable reference person until he or she is aware of all the relationships existing in the household. ABS experience in conducting surveys has shown that this difficulty can be overcome by asking the respondent to nominate a *head of household* as the first person listed on the collection form. Respondents usually have little difficulty in nominating a *head of household*, and frequently the person nominated is a suitable reference person in terms of the

reference person selection criteria. If the person nominated proves unsuitable as a reference person, the interviewer can substitute an appropriate person after recording and examining the relationship data, or a suitable reference person can be selected for family coding at the data processing stage.

Similarly, respondents can be prompted to choose the *head of household* as the first person listed on self-enumeration collection forms as this facilitates family coding and minimises subsequent re-processing. Once again, a suitable reference person can be substituted during data processing if the nominated person proves an unsuitable household reference person. It should be noted that the term *head of household* should only be used at the data collection phase and not in statistical output as it is sometimes considered to be inappropriately value-laden.

### Substituting a suitable reference person

There will be times when an individual has been nominated by the respondents as the head of the household, but this person is not the most suitable person to be the reference person either because if he or she is used as the reference person it would be difficult to code the Relationship in Household classification or because the individual in question does not fulfil the criteria for determining the household reference person. As mentioned in chapter 1 - *Overview of Family Variables*, the household reference person, whilst primarily a device to assist coding and processing relationship data, can also be used to create output variables. It is, therefore, necessary to have a set of criteria which are consistently applied to determine the household reference person. Depending upon the methodology being used to collect relationship data, this substituting of an inappropriate reference person with an appropriate person can be done after the interview, or through an input editing system.

Where an inappropriate household reference person has been nominated the relationships described in the raw data may be unsuitable for determining Relationship in Household. For example, if the household reference person was a son in a family comprised of his mother, father and sister the data would need to be processed so that one of the parents was the household reference person and each other family member was described in relation to that parent. This reallocation of the household reference person makes the coding of Relationship in Household straightforward as the classification is designed so that children in a family are described in relation to their parents, not the parents in relation to their children.

A standard hierarchic set of criteria is used to choose the most appropriate household member as the *household reference person*. In order to improve the

quality, consistency and comparability of data it is preferable that the *household reference person* is aged 15 years or over and, in order of preference:

- one of the partners in a registered or defacto marriage, or
- a lone parent, or
- the person with the highest income, or
- the owner, purchaser or primary rent payer of the household accommodation, or
- the eldest person.

The other times when the household reference person will need to be modified is in multifamily households. In households which contain more than one family, a *family reference person* has to be identified for each family. The following example illustrates why this further processing is needed and how it is done. Consider a four person household consisting of two sisters (Maria and Cristina) and their respective husbands (Juan and Manuel). If Maria is chosen as the household reference person then Manuel is initially coded as a brother-in-law. At the family level, however, the household is considered as consisting of two families and either Cristina or Manuel has to be chosen as the family reference person for the second family. The other spouse is then coded as the partner of that family reference person. If the household level coding were not further processed to family level, the household would be incorrectly regarded as a single family household and would be classified as a *couple family without children and with other related individuals*. When the correct procedures are applied the result is a two family household with each family being coded as a *couple family without children and no other related individuals*.

Once the household members have been allocated to families, the responses provided on the collection form are further processed so that a reference person is chosen for each family. For clarification of the rules for determining families in multifamily households refer to the section on Rules for identifying and coding families in Chapter 4 - *Standards for Statistics on Family Type*, pp 43-47.

To select each *family reference person* the hierarchic selection criteria which are detailed above are applied to each family from the top down. Then one of the *family reference persons* is also designated as the *household reference person*. To select the *household reference person* a further set of hierarchical criteria are applied to the *family reference persons* as follows:

- If one of the *family reference persons* is a partner in a marriage, that person is selected as *household reference person*.

- If more than one *family reference person* is a partner in a marriage, the reference person with dependent children is chosen.
- If more than one marriage partner has dependent children present, or none of the marriage partners has dependent children present, the non-family criteria (income, owner/purchaser, eldest person - see criteria above) are applied to the married family reference persons in order.
- If none of the *family reference persons* is married, a lone parent is chosen. If more than one lone parent is present the non-family criteria are applied in order.
- If none of the *family reference persons* has been chosen on the basis of the family criteria (one partner in a couple, the lone parent - see criteria above), the remaining non-family criteria are applied in order.

### **Questionnaire module - Alternative 1: Interviewer-based collections**

The interviewer-based collection methodology has a high level of accuracy when recording relationships within a household. The methodology detailed in this paper is used by the ABS and has proved successful in household-based surveys. It is achieved through the use of a two-column questionnaire format that allows for the recording of each household member's relationship to the household reference person (in column 1); and for the recording of their closer relationship to another household member if one exists (in column 2).

Before recording the relationships, all of the usual residents of the household have to be identified, even if they are temporarily absent. It is also necessary to determine if any individuals are to be excluded from the collection through the application of the scope and coverage rules. This is because accurate coding of family variables is dependent on information about all members of the household, regardless of whether or not they are to be included as individuals in the survey. See Chapter 1 - *Overview of Family Variables*, p 9 for a discussion of usual residency.

## The two-column questionnaire module

As stated above, the initial requirement in the interview-based questionnaire module is to determine who are the usual residents of the household. This is achieved by asking the following question:

**'What are the names of all the people who usually live here, starting with the head of the household?'**

A set of scope and coverage rules can then be applied to the usual residents and the visitors of the household. The scope rules are used to define the population relevant to the objectives of the survey being undertaken. Generally, only those individuals who satisfy scope rules are asked the survey specific questions. Nevertheless, all usual residents are listed on the questionnaire, regardless of their scope status, as their relationship to other residents effects family and household composition. The coverage rules are designed to ensure that each person in the population has only one chance of being selected in the survey. If further details about the scope and coverage questions are required, an example of the questions used by the ABS can be found in the *Families in Australia: Data Reference Package* ABS catalogue no. 4419.0.

After the usual residents are selected each individual is asked the following question:

**Including step, de facto and in-law, what is ..... 's relationship to the head of the household?**

The response provided is recorded in column 1. If, after collecting the relationship details, any of the relationships require further clarification, additional questions can be asked.

Name		Relationship	
		Column 1	Column 2
Person Number	Surname; First name	Relationship to person 1	Other relationship
01			
02			
03			
04			

In general, the household reference person is recorded as *Person 1*. All other members of the household are then recorded in a list. In single family households, the household and family structure is usually straightforward and thus it is not necessary to seek details for Column 2. Here are some examples of households where the second column would not need to be used:

Household 1			Household 2		
Person number	Relationship to person 1	Other relationship	Person number	Relationship to person 1	Other relationship
01	self		01	self	
02	wife		02	husband	
03	son		03	son	
04	son		04	daughter	
05			05	father	

### When to complete column 2

The second column will only need to be completed in households where the relationship structure is complex and information supplied in the first column is insufficient to identify all families. It should thus be used to investigate whether any person listed as being unrelated to the household reference person is related to any other household member, or whether persons related to the household reference person are more closely related to another member of the household.

There are four circumstances where the additional information is required to clarify the family structure of the household:

- if a person is unrelated to the household reference person;
- if a person is the child of a relative of the household reference person (eg. grandchild, niece, nephew or cousin);
- if a person is an 'in-law'; or
- if the family structure is otherwise unclear.

### Questions used to determine other relationships

If any person is reported as being *unrelated* to the household reference person further information is required and the interviewer should ask the following question:

**'Is .... related to anyone else in the household?'**

Household 3		
Person number	Relationship to person 1	Other relationship
01	self	
02	wife	
03	unrelated	husband of person 4
04	unrelated	

The additional information obtained in Household 3 reveals that persons 3 and 4 are married and thus impact on family formation in that there are two families in this household.

In households where the relationships to the household reference person are given as *grandchild*, *niece*, *nephew*, or *cousin* and another person in the household could be that person's parent, an additional question is also required.

**'Is .... more closely related to anyone else in the household?'**

Household 4			Household 5		
Person number	Relationship to person 1	Other relationship	Person number	Relationship to person 1	Other relationship
01	self		01	self	
02	wife		02	wife	
03	son		03	sister	
04	daughter		04	brother	
05	grand-daughter	daughter of person 4	05	niece	daughter of person 4



The additional information obtained in households 4 and 5 reveals additional parent-child relationships, and thus impacts on family formation.

When the relationship to the household reference person is given suffixed with *in-law* it is necessary to determine whether they are more closely related to someone else in the household.

In Household 6 an additional question is necessary to find out whether person 4 is married to person 3 or person 5 or if she is the sister of person 2. In these cases the appropriate question is also:

**'Is .... more closely related to anyone else in the household?'**

Household 6		
Person number	Relationship to person 1	Other relationship
01	self	
02	wife	
03	brother	
04	sister-in-law	wife of person 5
05	brother	

In any other case where the family structure within the household is unclear the interviewer should generally focus the probing on the individuals in the household whose relationship is unclear and use one of the questions suggested above, if appropriate.

### Avoid asking personal questions about couple relationships

It will be seen from the discussion above that it is not necessary to ask specific questions of a personal nature to identify couple relationships. The identification of *de facto* couples (including same sex couples) is thus reliant on respondents volunteering this information in reply to general questions about relationships between members of the household. More detailed questioning on this subject is considered unnecessary and intrusive.

## Self-enumerated collections

For determining relationships in households in self-enumerated collections the two-column questionnaire format is not suitable as respondents may find it difficult to understand what information they are required to provide. Two alternative questionnaire modules are presented.

### Questionnaire module - Alternative 2

The questionnaire module used in alternative 2 is based on the response to a single question. Using this method, a response is not required for Person 1; for each subsequent person the respondent is required to fill in the appropriate tick box in response to the question 'What is each person's relationship to Person 1/Person 2?' The set of response categories for Person 2 differs from that used for Persons 3 onwards. This approach, which was used in the 1991 Census of Population and Housing, works best if the form layout allows for recording of information about each person in columns across the page. See Appendix 3, which is a reproduction of the 1991 Census schedule.

In this question, person 1 is not required to provide a response.

**What is each person's relationship to Person 1/Person 2?**

Examples of other relationships: son-in-law, grand-daughter, uncle, boarder.

Person 1	Person 2	Person 3
Person 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Husband or wife of Person 1 <input type="checkbox"/> De facto partner of Person 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Child of Person 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Step-child of Person 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister of Person 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Unrelated flatmate or co-tenant of Person 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Other relationship to Person 1 - <i>please specify</i> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%; margin-top: 5px;"></div>	<input type="checkbox"/> Child of both Person 1 and Person 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Child of Person 1 only <input type="checkbox"/> Child of Person 2 only <input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister of Person 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Unrelated flatmate or co-tenant of Person 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Other relationship to Person 1 - <i>please specify</i> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%; margin-top: 5px;"></div>

Although this question is effective in the majority of situations, it fails to pick up complete relationship data in households with more than one family. In particular, it differs from alternative 3 in that individuals who are unrelated to person 1 are not asked for any further relationship details. However, like alternative 3, it does provide for the identification of step-children and blended families.

If relationship data from this question module are not adequate for family formation, further information on family structures can be derived with the assistance of other responses such as name, usual residence, or marital status.

### Alternative 3

This questionnaire module identifies both the relationship to the household reference person and any closer relationships with other household members. Although it is based on the response to a single question, extra information is requested if the individual is unrelated to person 1. It also provides for the identification of step-children and blended families.

As mentioned previously, the module is not fully developed and is the current outcome of a series of tests. It has not yet been implemented in ABS collections. It is provided as an example of a module for use in self-enumerated collections, when extra information about family relationships is needed.

If relationship data from this question module are not adequate for family formation, further information on family structures can be derived with the assistance of other responses such as name, usual residence, or marital status. If the collection permitted it, more detailed questions on relationship could of course be included.

Using this question, a response is not required for Person 1; for each subsequent person the respondent is required to fill in the appropriate tick box in response to the question 'What is each person's relationship to Person1/Person 2?' The set of response categories for Person 2 differs from that used for Persons 3 onwards.

**What is each person's relationship to Person 1/Person 2?**

Examples of other relationships: son-in-law, grand daughter, uncle, boarder.

Person 1	Person 2	Person 3
<p><b>Person 1</b></p>	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Husband or wife of Person 1  <input type="checkbox"/> De facto partner of Person 1  <input type="checkbox"/> Child of Person 1  <input type="checkbox"/> Step-child of Person 1  <input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister of Person 1  <input type="checkbox"/> Other relationship to Person 1 - please specify  <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div> </p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Not related to Person 1 - if related to another person in the household please specify who that person is and the relationship to that person.                       related to: <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px;"></div>                      relationship is: <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px;"></div> </p>	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Child of both Person 1 and Person 2  <input type="checkbox"/> Child of Person 1 only  <input type="checkbox"/> Child of Person 2 only  <input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister of Person 1  <input type="checkbox"/> Other relationship to Person 1 - please specify  <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div> </p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Not related to Person 1 - if related to another person in the household please specify who that person is and the relationship to that person.                       related to: <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px;"></div>                      relationship is: <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px;"></div> </p>

## Other variables required to determine Relationship in Household

To determine Relationship in Household as described in Chapter 3 - *Standards for Statistics on Relationship in Household*, information is required in addition to the data from the above questionnaire modules. Specifically, it must be known whether the usual residents attend an educational institution full-time, and also their age and sex. For more details see: *Standards for Statistics on Age and Sex* (1285.0). The publication of standards for social, labour and demographic variables is an ongoing process and other publications in the series, such as the *Standards for Statistics on Core Labour Force Variables*, are planned for future release.

The standard question for the variable *age* is:

For interview-based collections:

**What was ... age last birthday?**

For self-enumeration collections:

**Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

(Specify day, month, year)

The standard question for the variable *sex* is:

**Sex:**

- ☐ **Male**
- ☐ **Female**

The standard question for the variable *full/part-time student* is:

For interview-based collections:

**Is [the person]/are you currently studying at a school, TAFE college, university or other educational institution as a full-time student?**

If data on part-time students are also required then ask:

**Is [the person]/are you currently studying at a school, TAFE college, university or other educational institution?**

**Is [the person]/are you studying full-time or part-time?**

- ☐ **Full-time**
- ☐ **Part-time**

For self-enumeration collections:

**Is the person attending a school or any other educational institution?**

- Include external or correspondence students.
  - ☐ **No**
  - ☐ **Yes, full-time student**
  - ☐ **Yes, part-time student**

# 3

## Standards for Statistics on Relationship in Household

### Introduction

This chapter presents ABS standards for the social variable *Relationship in Household*. Through publication of these standards the ABS is disseminating the concept, definition, classification and output structures which will facilitate the production of comparable data about household and family relationships.

*Relationship in Household* is used to determine familial and non-familial relationships between persons residing within the same household. Such information provides the basis on which statistics of household type, family type, social marital status and income unit type are produced. It also provides information on family blending, types of multifamily households, and extended families.

Although one of the major uses of this classification is to provide input to Family Type and other classifications, the output from the Relationship in Household classification is also used in social analysis through the cross-classification of relationship in household with other socio-demographic variables. For example, the Labour Force Survey produces statistics about the labour force status of husbands, wives, lone parents, dependent students and other members of households.

## Descriptive title

The ABS recommends *Relationship in Household* as the title for this concept in all statistical collections. This term has been chosen as the standard title because it reflects the fact that the concept is focused both on relationships in the family and, more broadly, on those in the household (including boarders and unrelated flatmates).

Other terms which have been used to describe the concept are *Family Status* and *Position in Family/Household*. Since these terms carry connotations of status, they may give a misleading impression of the concept we wish to measure.

## Definition

*Relationship in Household* is the reported familial or non-familial relationship of each person to a household or family reference person. It is based on the concepts of *household* and *family* which are discussed in Chapter 1 - *Overview of Family Variables*, pp 2-7.

Persons who are usual residents of another household are included in the *Relationship in Household* classification but information collected from them is not used in family coding. They are assigned to a separate category of *visitor*.

The *Relationship in Household* classification can be applied to any form of accommodation or dwelling which contain households. On the whole, persons living in non-private dwellings such as hospitals, prisons, homes for the aged, etc. are outside the scope of the classification as households are not found there. However, under certain conditions, retirement villages, hotels, motels and serviced apartments may contain households, in which case the *Relationship in Household* classification could be applied. The standard practice in the ABS is to exclude people in non-private dwellings from family coding. The exceptions to this rule have been surveys with a particular population of interest, such as the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey, and the Survey of Families in Australia, 1992.



## Classification criteria

The Relationship in Household classification uses three criteria to classify household members:

- (i) residency,
- (ii) family membership, and
- (iii) relationship.

The criteria are applied in stages. The first criterion, *residency*, differentiates persons on the basis of whether they are a *usual resident* of the household or a *visitor*. *Visitors* are coded as such and are not described in terms of their relationship to usual residents of the household. As stated previously, the ABS has not standardised the definition of *usual residency*, however, the recommended interim definition is outlined in Chapter 1 - *Overview of Family Variables*, p 9.

The second criterion, *family membership*, differentiates persons on the basis of whether they are family members or non-family members. Family members are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step, or fostering to at least one other usual resident of the household. Non-family members are unrelated individuals and may include people who form lone person households, group households, or who may be attached to family households as unrelated individuals (such as boarders).

The third criterion, *relationship*, differentiates persons on the basis of the relationship they have to a household or family reference person and each other. This criterion is applicable to persons within both family and non-family households. In family households the relationship criterion involves the consideration of factors such as couple relationships, parent-child relationships, dependency, and other blood relationships. These family relationship criteria are discussed at length in the Chapter 4 - *Standards for Statistics on Family Type*, pp 41-43.

An additional classification variable is necessary to identify the family to which each individual belongs in a multifamily household. This variable which is known as the *Family number* allows for up to 9 separate families to be coded from the Relationship in Household data (see discussion on *Family number classification and code structure* on p 36).

## Classification and coding issues

The standard Relationship in Household classification has a four-level hierarchical structure which allows classification of relationships at the most detailed level, and which provides for the presentation of data at various levels of aggregation. Thus the 8 categories at the broadest level can be aggregated further, depending on user requirements or output conventions. For instance, the first 6 categories can be aggregated to form the category of *family members*, with the 7th category remaining as *non-family members*. For a complete description of the categories in the Relationship in Household classification, definitions are provided in the Glossary and in Appendix 1. The standard classification categories and code structure for all levels are as follows:

### Code structure

#### Residents

- 1 Husband, wife or partner
  - 11 In a registered marriage
  - 12 In a de facto marriage
    - 15 Opposite-sex couple
    - 16 Same-sex couple
      - 17 Male same-sex couple
      - 18 Female same-sex couple
- 2 Lone parent
  - 21 Lone parent
- 3 Child under 15
  - 30 Child under 15 (not further defined)
  - 31 Natural or adopted child under 15
  - 32 Step-child under 15
  - 33 Foster child under 15
  - 34 Otherwise related child under 15
  - 35 Unrelated child under 15
- 4 Dependent student
  - 40 Dependent student (not further defined)
  - 41 Natural or adopted dependent student
  - 42 Student step-child
  - 43 Student foster child

- 5 Non-dependent child
  - 50 Non-dependent child (not further defined)
  - 51 Non-dependent natural or adopted child
  - 52 Non-dependent step-child
  - 53 Non-dependent foster child
  
- 6 Other related individual
  - 60 Other related individual (not further defined)
  - 61 Brother/Sister
  - 62 Father/Mother
  - 63 Grandchild
  - 64 Grandfather/Grandmother
  - 65 Cousin
  - 66 Uncle/Aunt
  - 67 Nephew/Niece
  - 68 Other related individual (not elsewhere classified)
  
- 7 Non-family member
  - 71 Unrelated individual living in a family household
  - 72 Group household member
  - 73 Lone person

**Non-residents**

- 9 Visitor
  - 99 Visitor

Categories 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 41, 42, 43, and 51, 52, 53 (which distinguish step-children and other children) need only be used when a collection has a specific requirement to collect information about the existence of step-children or blended families. When information on the types of children present in the family is not required, the codes 30, 40 or 50 need only be used.

A person who responds as a step or an in-law, and who does not form a couple or parent-child relationship, will be coded to the appropriate type of relationship in the other related individual codes (60-68). Thus if a household is composed of a reference person, wife, daughter, son, and mother-in-law, the mother-in-law will be coded to 62 Father/Mother. Effectively this means that, for couple families, the relationship is expressed as the relationship to either member of a family nucleus. A detailed set of rules for forming families is provided in Chapter 4 - *Standards for Statistics on Family Type*, pp 43-47.

## Reasons for using the two-digit code

This classification uses a two-digit code rather than a four-digit code, which would usually be recommended for what is essentially a four level hierarchical classification structure. This serves to improve efficiency in data storage and coding procedures. Specifically, a two-digit code considerably reduces the number of entry key strokes and the amount of data storage space required in processing the data. At the same time, the two-digit code structure makes the digits used to code de facto couples (5, 6, 7 and 8) consistent with the code structures for Marital Status and Family Type.

## Identifying step-children

To be coded as a step-child a person must be identified as the step-son or step-daughter of either partner in a couple family or as the step-child of the lone parent in a one-parent family.

It should be noted that the standard relationship questionnaire module used in interview-based collections does not provide sufficient information to identify step-children reliably. Although the standard relationship questionnaire module asks the question: 'Including step, de facto and in-law, what is each person's relationship to the head of the household?' there could be situations where coding of these relationships varies, depending upon which individual is nominated as the family reference person. For example, a household could be comprised of a married couple with children, where the woman is remarried and the children are hers from a previous marriage, and the husband does not have any of his own natural children present in the household. If the woman was the reference person, her husband would be recorded as the spouse and the children as son/ daughter of the reference person. The information may not be volunteered by the respondents that the children are step-children of the husband. If, on the other hand, the husband was the reference person, the children are more likely to be reported as step-children.

Reliable coding of step relationships can be achieved through the use of additional questions, such as in the Survey of Families in Australia, 1992, or as in the detailed closed-ended response categories of the self-enumeration questionnaire modules. See Chapter 2 - *Relationship Questionnaire Modules for Family Variables*, pp 22-24 for self-enumeration modules alternatives 2 & 3 and see the *Families in Australia: Data reference package* (ABS cat. no. 4419.0) for an example of the additional questions asked in the Survey of Families.

## Couple relationships

Couple relationships should be coded and the data stored at the most detailed level. These categories are as follows:

- 11 In a registered marriage
- 15 Opposite-sex (de facto) couple
- 17 Male same-sex (de facto) couple
- 18 Female same-sex (de facto) couple

Categories 1, 12 and 16 are used for output only and are not recommended for data storage.

## Multifamily households

The process of allocating relationship codes in a single family or a non-family household is relatively simple. In the case of households with more than one family, however, the process is more complex as the Relationship in Household codes must be allocated on a family by family basis for each member of a family. A set of rules for allocating individuals to families is provided in Chapter 4 - *Standards for Statistics on Family Type*, pp 43-47.

Consider a four person household consisting of a couple (Edward and Imogen) who are married in a registered marriage, their son (Andrew) and Andrew's son Brendan who is aged 2. By the stage of coding relationship in household the appropriate reference persons should have been determined. See the earlier discussion in Chapter 2 - *Relationship Questionnaire Modules for Family Variables*, pp 15-17 where the process of substituting a suitable reference person is outlined. In this example, Edward and Imogen are both coded as 11 Husband, wife or partner in a registered marriage. Andrew is coded as 21 Lone parent and Brendan is coded as 31 Natural, or adopted child under 15. At the family level the household consists of two families.

## Questionnaire module

The standard questionnaire modules used to collect the information required to identify and classify each person's relationship in household are outlined in Chapter 2 - *Relationship Questionnaire Modules for Family Variables*.

## **Output classifications**

The categories of the Relationship in Household classification can be output in their own right or cross-classified by a range of other socio-demographic variables. A major purpose of this classification, however, is to construct larger entities such as income and family units which are important for further analysis. The output of the Relationship in Household classification is used directly as input to the Family Type, Household Type, and Income Unit Type classifications.

The standard output categories are the categories of the classification itself. The output categories with appropriate headings for each are as follows:

- Husband, wife or partner
  - In a registered marriage
  - In a de facto marriage
- Lone parent
- Child under 15
  - Natural or adopted child under 15
  - Step-child under 15
  - Foster child under 15
  - Otherwise related child under 15
  - Unrelated child under 15
- Dependent student
  - Natural or adopted dependent student
  - Student step-child
  - Student foster child
- Non-dependent child
  - Non-dependent natural or adopted child
  - Non-dependent step-child
  - Non-dependent foster child
- Other related individual
  - Brother/Sister
  - Father/Mother
  - Grandchild
  - Grandfather/Grandmother
  - Cousin
  - Uncle/Aunt
  - Nephew/Niece
  - Other related individual (nec)
- Non-family member
  - Unrelated individual in family household
  - Group household member
  - Lone person
- Visitor

Another standard output option is derived by aggregating the two categories of dependent child (that is *Child under 15* and *Dependent student*), to form a single output category of *Dependent child*.

This results in the following output classification:

- Husband, wife or partner
  - In a registered marriage
  - In a de facto marriage
- Lone parent
- Dependent child
  - Dependent natural or adopted child
  - Dependent step-child
  - Dependent foster child
  - Otherwise related child under 15
  - Unrelated child under 15
- Non-dependent child
  - Non-dependent natural or adopted child
  - Non-dependent step-child
  - Non-dependent foster child
- Other related individual
  - Brother/Sister
  - Father/Mother
  - Grandchild
  - Grandfather/Grandmother
  - Cousin
  - Uncle/Aunt
  - Nephew/Niece
  - Other related individual (nec)
- Non-family member
  - Unrelated individual in family household
  - Group household member
  - Lone person
- Visitor

It is expected that output from most collections will be at the broadest level only. If detailed level output is chosen it may be necessary to have some of the categories suppressed. For example, in both standard output variations the distinction between the types of child is optional. This will depend on whether the information is available from the response data.

The disaggregation of de facto couples into opposite-sex and same-sex couples is not recommended for standard output. This is because the reporting of same-sex couple relationships is not expected to be high, and thus data quality at a more detailed level is likely to be low.

## **Family number classification and code structure**

In addition to a relationship code, each member in a given household needs to be identified with a code which indicates to which family he or she belongs, or whether the individual is a non-family member. This is achieved by assigning a unique family number to each household member.

The standard *Family number* classification has one level, with up to nine separate categories to which families can be coded. A single digit code, in the range 0 to 9, is assigned to each person to indicate the family to which the person belongs. The code 0 is assigned to persons who are not members of any family within a household. The code 1 is assigned to all family members in one-family households, or to members of the first family in households with more than one family. The first family is the one which contains the household reference person. The codes 2 to 9 are for additional families within the household. The classification and code structure for this variable is outlined below.

### **Family number**

- 0 Non-family member
- 1 Member of first family in household
- 2 Member of second family in household
- 3 Member of third family in household
- ...
- 9 Member of ninth family in household

Rules for forming families for classification purposes are outlined in Chapter 4 - *Standards for Statistics on Family Type*, pp 43-47.

## **Other variables derived from Relationship in Household**

The Relationship in Household classification can be used to derive other family related variables which may be used in analysis of family and household composition. Standards for these other family related variables are currently being developed by the ABS. Until such time as these are completed a general discussion about a few family variables is provided here. They are included as examples of the way the Relationship in Household classification can be used to



develop variables in addition to family type, household type and social marital status. They are not intended to be an exhaustive list of other family related variables. The variables discussed here are: Family blending, and Lone ancestor indicator.

### Family blending

Family blending can be constructed through indicating the types of children present in the family, in particular natural and step. The definitions of blended family and step family are as follows:

#### Blended family

*A blended family is defined as a couple family containing two or more children, of whom at least one is the natural, adopted or foster child of both members of the couple, and at least one is the step child of either member of the couple.*

#### Step family

*A step family is defined as a couple family containing one or more children, none of whom is the natural, adopted or foster child of both members of the couple, and at least one of whom is the step child of either member of the couple.*

### Lone ancestor indicator

Details about the presence of lone ancestors can be developed through the *other related individual* category of the Relationship in Household classification.

A variable which combines categories 62 Father/Mother and 64 Grandfather/Grandmother will produce output about lone ancestors.



## 4

# Standards for Statistics on Family Type

### Introduction

This chapter presents ABS standards for the variable Family Type. The standards are intended for use wherever social, labour and demographic statistics on family type are collected, processed and disseminated.

Family Type is suitable for the collection and dissemination of data for a broad range of purposes including analysis of family structure, size and composition. It can also be used to examine issues related to the family unit, such as family support networks within households and the durability of the traditional family structure, which are of importance to government policy, social and welfare agencies, and the community at large.

It is an essential variable for the analysis of the social and economic well-being of both the family unit and the individuals within those families. This is a broad level concern of the ABS social and labour statistics program and of the policy and program initiatives of other agencies.

### Previous Family Type classifications

Until recently, a number of family type classifications were used in ABS statistical collections. Essentially, these were built around the same household-based definition of the family and used the same classification criteria. The three major types of family at the broadest level of output were: couple families, one parent families and other families. Also, previous classifications included both

registered and de facto marriages. Despite these similarities there were significant differences in the definitions and classification structures. These include various definitions of a *one parent family*, *dependency* and *family member*. When comparing data collected prior to the implementation of these standards with data collected since their implementation, a close reading of the definitions of the various categories in the family type classification and the relationship in household is recommended. This should assist users in understanding any break in time series.

The standards for family type outlined in this chapter retain the three major types of family and include both registered and de facto marriages. All definitions used have been standardised and features have been introduced that increase the utility of the standards for a wide range of applications. The concepts and definitions used are, in general, consistent with those used in the Survey of Families in Australia, 1992 and in the 1991 Census of Population and Housing.

These standards are intended to aid the interpretation of ABS statistics on family type and their use by all other agencies wishing to collect family data is encouraged. The adoption of these standards will thus facilitate the production of data comparable and compatible with that of the ABS, and with other collections of statistics on the family which have adopted these standards.

## **Definition**

The standards for Family Type are based on a number of concepts, such as *household* and *family*. These concepts are common to a number of variables presented in this publication and are defined and discussed in Chapter 1- *Overview of Family Variables*, pp 2-7.

Families can be differentiated into different types on the basis of the relationships that exist between members of particular families. Specific types of families are identified by focusing on a family in terms of the familial and dependency relationships that exist between its members. The use of this type of classification system allows analysts to compare families of similar characteristics with families of different characteristics, or with the population as a whole.

Family type is thus defined as:

*the differentiation of families based on the presence or absence of couple relationships, parent-child relationships, child dependency relationships or other blood relationships, in that order of precedence.*

In determining family type, families are considered in terms of the relationships that exist between a single family reference person and each other member of that family. Other important characteristics of families, such as the number of children, the size of the family, or the age of the reference person, are treated as separate variables, and are not used to differentiate categories in the Family Type classification.

### **Classification criteria**

The differentiation of families into family types, detailed above, allows families to be described in terms of a standard set of classification categories. Each family can be assigned to a particular category of the classification on the basis of a standard hierarchic set of classification criteria.

The family type classification uses four basic criteria to categorise families:

- couple relationships;
- parent-child relationships;
- child dependency; and
- other blood relationships.

A *couple relationship* is defined as two people usually residing in the same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond usually associated with marriage and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union. It is measured by the presence of a registered marriage or de facto marriage.

A *parent-child relationship* is defined as a relationship between two people, one the nominal *parent* and the other the nominal *child*. Both must usually reside in the same household. Whilst a parent must be 15 years of age or over, a child may be a natural, adopted, step or foster child of any age. A child can also be an otherwise related person under the age of 15 or unrelated person under the age of 15.

The classification criterion *child dependency* is used in developing the structure of the classification by distinguishing *dependent children* from *non-dependent children*.

Dependency is only used to indicate children who are still economically dependent upon their parents. It is not a measure of any other form of dependency, such as that of an aged parent or handicapped person. This criterion is, therefore, only concerned with determining if a child is dependent on a parent in a very broad sense. The evaluation of dependency is based on three characteristics: relationship status, student status and age. Children are classified as dependent if they satisfy the definition of a *child* and they are 0-14 years of age, or 15-24 years of age and a full-time secondary or tertiary student. Age and student status offer a simple standard that allows the measurement of a complex concept that in its entirety depends on many factors. The rationale behind separating children into these categories is to identify those families containing children who, it is assumed, cannot provide for themselves. This is of direct relevance to a range of major government programmes concerned with income and family support.

An *other blood relationship* refers to relationships between two people formed through blood or via a marriage, other than a couple or parent-child relationship. There is no limit to the members of a family who can be considered as being related to the family reference person by direct lineage, that is, from generation to generation. For example, grandmothers, great-grandmothers and even great-great-grandmothers are all considered as being related to the family reference person. Similarly, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren are considered as being related to the family reference person. However, any relation beyond the first cousin of a family member is excluded. A list of the familial relationships that fall within the scope of an *other blood relationship* is given in the rules for identifying and coding families described later in this chapter.

Although there are many characteristics of families that are of interest, the above criteria have been identified as the most important and most frequently used. Additional family characteristics can be obtained by cross-classifying family type with other variables.

### Application of the classification criteria

The recommended standard classification structure is based on the four criteria discussed above.

At the broadest level (level 1), the classification is based on the presence or absence of a couple relationship, parent-child relationship, or other blood relationship. The application of these three criteria serve to delineate the standard family groupings of couple family with children, couple family without children, one parent family and other family.

At the second level of the classification, the criterion used to differentiate family types are the presence or absence of dependent children and (if present) the type of dependent children. At the third level of the classification presence of non-dependent children is used to categorise families. At the fourth and most detailed level of the classification, the presence or absence of other related individuals is used.

### **Rules for identifying and coding families**

There are nine rules for identifying a family and allocating individuals to it. In particular, these rules clarify how individuals should be allocated to families in households where the relationships between individuals are complex, such as multifamily households. These rules must be considered in the order they are presented.

**RULE 1.** A family can only be formed from persons usually resident in the same household, one of whom must be 15 years of age or over.

**RULE 2.** A separate family nucleus is formed for each married couple. There can be only one couple per family. In cases where there are two couples in a household, these would become multifamily households, with two families present.

**RULE 3.** A couple family exists if two people have formed a couple relationship. This is defined as two people usually residing in the same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond usually associated with marriage and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union. It is measured by the presence of a registered marriage or de facto marriage.

**RULE 4.** A lone parent-to-child relationship forms the nucleus of a separate family when the parent is not a partner in a couple relationship; the child is not a partner in a couple relationship and has no children of his or her own living in the same household. If in a one parent family there are two or more children present, the nucleus is formed between the parent and eldest child.

**RULE 5.** Persons not directly forming the couple family nucleus or one parent family nucleus are allocated to the family nucleus to which they are most closely related. For example, children of a couple are allocated to that couple and children of a one parent family are allocated to the family nucleus of their parent and eldest sibling unless they form a couple or one parent family themselves.

**RULE 6.** The formation of the family nucleus and the subsequent attaching of people to this nucleus has a set of priority rules in multifamily households or multigenerational families.

If there is any doubt about which way to form the family and the doubt arises over a parent-child relationship, use the following rules in the order listed (the rules are described more fully below):

- a) most recent generation rule
- b) eldest child rule
- c) child to female parent rule

Where a doubt arises from family relationships other than parent-child relationships, use the following rules in the order listed:

- d) eldest relative rule
- e) closest blood relationship rule

a) Where a lone parent-child relationship exists for two generations in the same household the **most recent generation** forms the family nucleus. Thus if a household contains a 70-year-old parent, who has no partner present, a 50-year-old daughter and her 20-year-old son, then the 50-year-old and the 20-year-old form the family nucleus and the 70-year-old is attached to the family as a *father/mother (other related individual)*.



Another example of the **most recent generation rule** in a multifamily household is a household consisting of a couple aged 75 and 73 (family 1) who live with their son aged 50, his daughter aged 20 and the daughter's husband aged 22 (family 2). In this case, the son aged 50 could be attached to family 1 as a *non-dependent child* or family 2 as a *father/mother (other related individual)*. The most recent generation rule attaches him to family 2 as a *father/mother (other related individual)*.

b) Other situations may arise where it is possible to allocate a person to more than one family in the household. These cases may be resolved by the application of the **eldest child rule**. For example, if a multifamily household was composed of a widower who lives with his son and daughter, where the son, aged 35, has formed a family nucleus with a partner (family 1) and the daughter, aged 25, has a child present and has thus formed a one parent family nucleus (family 2), then the widower is attached to the family nucleus of his eldest child, ie. family 1, as a *father/mother (other related individual)*.

c) Where the parents of a child or children no longer consider themselves a couple but still live in the same household, then the **child to female parent rule** is used to form a lone parent family nucleus comprising the mother and eldest child. The father is attached to this family as a relative of the eldest child, unless he has another partner resident in the household.

d) In a multifamily household where it is possible to allocate a person to more than one family using the same relationship (an aunt, for example, to the family of either of her two nephews), the person is allocated to the family of his or her **eldest relative**.

e) In a multifamily household where a person is an *other related individual* and is related to more than one family (an aunt, for example, to one family but a grandmother to another) he or she should be allocated to the family where the **closer blood relationship** lies. That is, relationships by lineage (vertical) take precedence over other types of relationships. For example, grandmother over aunt, or aunt over cousin.

**RULE 7.** If a couple family or one parent family does not exist and two people in the household are related (see Rule 9 for qualifying relationships) then they form the nucleus of an *other family*.

**RULE 8.** Individuals can be attached to the *other family* nucleus if they are *related* to either one of the persons forming the nucleus or to any other person added to the *other family* provided they do not form, or can not be allocated to, a couple or lone parent family in the household.

**RULE 9.** Only the following familial relationships are included in the definition of the term *related*:

Self	Sister
Husband	Step-sister
Wife	Half-sister
De facto marriage partner	Sister in-law
Son	Brother
Step-son	Step-brother
Son in-law	Half-brother
Daughter	Brother in-law
Step-daughter	Aunt
Daughter in-law	Step-aunt
Mother	Aunt in-law
Step-mother	Uncle
Mother-in-law	Step-uncle
Father	Uncle in-law
Step-father	Nephew
Father in-law	Step-nephew
Grandmother	Nephew in-law
Step-grandmother	Niece
Grandmother in-law	Step-niece
Grandfather	Niece in-law
Step-grandfather	Cousin
Grandfather in-law	Step-cousin
Grandson	Cousin in-law
Step-grandson	
Grandson in-law	
Grand-daughter	
Step-grand-daughter	
Grand-daughter in-law	

In addition to this list, any direct ancestors (such as great-grandmother) or direct descendants (such as great-grandchild) are considered *related*, however, any relative beyond first cousin is not considered *related*. For example, second cousins (or more), and great uncles and great aunts are excluded. Adopted and foster relationships are treated as natural relationships.

The flow chart at the end of this chapter provides a visual representation of how families are identified and classified at the broadest level (super group level).

## Classification structure

The standard classification of *family type* has a four level hierarchy:

- Super group level
- Major group level
- Minor group level, and
- Detailed group level.

### Super group level

At the super group level (the broadest level of the classification) there are four family types. These are based on the presence or absence of a couple relationship, a parent-child relationship, or other blood relationship. The application of these three criteria delineate the standard family groupings of four family types:

- Couple family with children,
- Couple family without children,
- One parent family, and
- Other family.

The identification of couples without children at this level of the classification is an important feature as it immediately identifies approximately one third of all families.

Note: The use of the descriptive title *Couple family without children* does not indicate that all couples included in this category are childless. Whilst some couples may be childless, others may fit the description of *couple family without children* because they do not currently have children living with them.

To establish the family type of a family at the super group level the relationships that exist between a family reference person and each other member of that family are considered. Family type is then allocated on the basis of whether the following types of relationships, in order of precedence, are present or not in the family:

- Couple relationship
- Parent-child relationship
- Other blood relationship

See *Glossary* (pp 123- 139) and *Classification criteria* section (pp 41-42) for definitions of these relationships, and the *Flow chart* (p 66) for an illustration of the order of precedence.

As an example of the application of these rules of precedence, consider the example of two elderly brothers living with the family of the daughter of one of the brothers. The daughter's family forms the basic family of the household and the two brothers are both allocated to this family unit as other related individuals. The brother who is the father of the daughter would be coded as *father/mother* and the other brother would be coded as *uncle/aunt*. The two brothers do not form a separate family in their own right in addition to the daughter's family, because the *parent-child* relationship between the brother and his daughter is of higher precedence than the *other blood* relationship between the two brothers.

The disadvantage of this broad classification is that any one category includes a wide range of families. Specifically the super group level includes the traditional notion of a lone parent with young children or a mature person living with an aged parent in the category of *one parent family*. Care should therefore be taken in analysing the data.

### More detailed levels

For more complex analyses, the three other levels of the classification are based on more detailed family information. At the major group level (level 2) family type categories are based on the presence or absence of dependent children and (if present) the type of dependent children. This requires making the distinction between two readily identifiable subgroups of dependent children: *children under 15* and *dependent students*. The minor group level (level 3) categories further disaggregates families by whether or not non-dependent children are present in the family; and the detailed group level (level 4) further disaggregates families depending on whether or not other related individuals are present in the family. Finally, the *type of couple identifier* which distinguishes between opposite-sex

couples, male same-sex couples and female same-sex couples can be applied at any level of the classification as required.

The following table summarises the links between the levels of the classification and the criteria used to distinguish between categories.

**Classification criteria as they are applied at each level**

Level	Name and Number of Categories	Basis for differentiation
1	Super group (4)	Presence of a couple relationship and/or the presence of children or presence of other blood relationship
2	Major group (10)	Presence or absence and type of dependent children
3	Minor group (16)	Presence or absence of non-dependent children
4	Detailed group (31)	Presence or absence of other related individuals
	Type of couple identifier (4)	Sex of partners in couple relationship

## Code structure

In the classification structure a combination of the digits 1, 2, 3, 4 and 9 is used at the four levels to code each of the categories available at that particular level. In addition, a unique set of codes (5, 6, 7 & 8), described as *type of couple identifier*, is provided to distinguish the sex of partners in couple relationships. The identifier can be applied at any of the four levels of the classification (see Output classifications section, p 63). The codes used maintain consistency with other related classification structures which code opposite-sex and same-sex couples separately. Following is a summary of what each digit represents at each level in the classification.

### At level 1:

- 1 = couple family with children
- 2 = couple family without children
- 3 = one parent family
- 9 = other family

### At level 2:

- 1 = only children under 15 present
- 2 = only dependent students present
- 3 = both children under 15 and dependent students present
- 4 = no dependent children present

### At level 3:

- 1 = non-dependent children present
- 2 = no non-dependent children present

### At level 4:

- 1 = other related individuals present
- 2 = no other related individuals present

### Type of couple identifier:

- 0 = no couple present
- 5 = opposite-sex couples
- 6 = same-sex couples (not further defined)
- 7 = male same-sex couples
- 8 = female same-sex couples

The code structure for family type at all levels is presented in the tables below. As the category titles are lengthy and involve many common elements, a scope statement for each of the categories is included in Appendix 1 - *Definitions of the classification categories* (pp 89-108).

<b>1</b>	<b>COUPLE FAMILY WITH CHILDREN</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Couple family with children under 15</b>
111	Couple family with children under 15 and non-dependent children
1111	<i>Couple family with children under 15, non-dependent children and other related individuals</i>
1112	<i>Couple family with children under 15, non-dependent children and no other related individuals</i>
112	Couple family with children under 15 and no non-dependent children
1121	<i>Couple family with children under 15, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals</i>
1122	<i>Couple family with children under 15, no non-dependent children and with no other related individuals</i>
<b>12</b>	<b>Couple family with dependent students</b>
121	Couple family with dependent students and non-dependent children
1211	<i>Couple family with dependent students, non-dependent children and other related individuals</i>
1212	<i>Couple family with dependent students, non-dependent children and no other related individuals</i>
122	Couple family with dependent students and no non-dependent children
1221	<i>Couple family with dependent students, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals</i>
1222	<i>Couple family with dependent students, no non-dependent children and with no other related individuals</i>

<b>13</b>	<b>Couple family with children under 15 and dependent students</b>
131	Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children
1311	<i>Couple family with children under 15, dependent students, non-dependent children and other related individuals</i>
1312	<i>Couple family with children under 15, dependent students, non-dependent children and no other related individuals</i>
132	Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children
1321	<i>Couple family with children under 15, dependent students, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals</i>
1322	<i>Couple family with children under 15, dependent students, no non-dependent children and with no other related individuals</i>
<b>14</b>	<b>Couple family with non-dependent children</b>
141	Couple family with non-dependent children
1411	<i>Couple family with non-dependent children and other related individuals</i>
1412	<i>Couple family with non-dependent children and no other related individuals</i>
<b>2</b>	<b>COUPLE FAMILY WITHOUT CHILDREN</b>
24	<b>Couple family without children</b>
242	Couple family without children
2421	<i>Couple family without children and with other related individuals</i>
2422	<i>Couple family without children and no other related individuals</i>



<b>3</b>	<b>ONE PARENT FAMILY</b>
<b>31</b>	<b>One parent family with children under 15</b>
311	One parent family with children under 15 and non-dependent children
3111	<i>One parent family with children under 15, non-dependent children and other related individuals</i>
3112	<i>One parent family with children under 15, non-dependent children and no other related individuals</i>
312	One parent family with children under 15 and no non-dependent children
3121	<i>One parent family with children under 15, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals</i>
3122	<i>One parent family with children under 15, no non-dependent children and with no other related individuals</i>
<b>32</b>	<b>One parent family with dependent students</b>
321	One parent family with dependent students and non-dependent children
3211	<i>One parent family with dependent students, non-dependent children and other related individuals</i>
3212	<i>One parent family with dependent students, non-dependent children and no other related individuals</i>
322	One parent family with dependent students and no non-dependent children
3221	<i>One parent family with dependent students, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals</i>
3222	<i>One parent family with dependent students, no non-dependent children and with no other related individuals</i>

<b>33</b>	<b>One parent family with children under 15 and dependent students</b>
331	One parent family with children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children
3311	<i>One parent family with children under 15, dependent students, non-dependent children and other related individuals</i>
3312	<i>One parent family with children under 15, dependent students, non-dependent children and no other related individuals</i>
332	One parent family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children
3321	<i>One parent family with children under 15, dependent students, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals</i>
3322	<i>One parent family with children under 15, dependent students, no non-dependent children and with no other related individuals</i>
<b>34</b>	<b>One parent family with non-dependent children</b>
341	One parent family with non-dependent children
3411	<i>One parent family with non-dependent children and other related individuals</i>
3412	<i>One parent family with non-dependent children and no other related individuals</i>
<b>9</b>	<b>OTHER FAMILY</b>
94	<b>Other family</b>
942	Other family
9429	<i>Other family</i>

## Questionnaire module

The recommended questionnaire modules for Family Type are presented in Chapter 2 - *Relationship Questionnaire Modules for Family Variables*. These modules are also used for the variables Relationship in Household, Household Type and Social Marital Status.

In addition a *family number* is required to identify the family to which particular household members belong, to ensure that the family type is coded correctly. Details on the family number are discussed in Chapter 3 - *Standards for Statistics on Relationship in Household*, p36.

## Output classifications

The hierarchical structure of the classification allows the flexibility to output statistics at the level of the classification that best suits the purpose for which the statistics are required.

As output requirements will vary, alternative output labels and structures have been presented in this publication. There are two different approaches which can be taken: outputting at one level at a time, or outputting more than one level in a nested or hierarchical structure. Standard labels for these two approaches have been provided below to ensure comparability of published results.

These labels are shortened versions of the full titles of the classification categories, and provide a relatively concise method of presenting tabular output. Many of these short labels are necessarily somewhat cryptic. It is, therefore, recommended that, when they are used in statistical publications and reports, the definitions of categories provided in Appendix 1 are made available as explanatory notes and referred to via footnoting. Alternatively the full titles of the classification categories, provided above, may be used if convenient.

## Concordance with previous ABS Family Type classifications

One of the aims addressed when developing the ABS standard family classification was to make it comparable with previous family classifications. Appendix 2 (pp 109-118) contains a concordance with previous ABS family classifications. In this concordance the standard Family Type classification is augmented by the provision of a number of supplementary codes and labels representing useful aggregations of particular categories of the classification. These amalgamations of family types are designed specifically for output purposes and can be used to compare data produced using the family type

standards with data from the 1991 Census of Population and Housing and the Survey of Families in Australia 1992.

Output at one level of the classification

**Output labels for super groups**

Couple family with children

Couple family without children

One parent family

Other family

**Output labels for major groups**

Couple family with children under 15

Couple family with dependent students

Couple family with children under 15 and dependent students

Couple family with non-dependent children

Couple family without children

One parent family with children under 15

One parent family with dependent students

One parent family with children under 15 and dependent students

One parent family with non-dependent children

Other family

**Output labels for minor groups**

Couple, children under 15 and non-dependent children

Couple, and children under 15

Couple, dependent students and non-dependent children

Couple, and dependent students

Couple, children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children

Couple, children under 15, dependent students

Couple, and non-dependent children

Couple, without children

Lone parent, children under 15 and non-dependent children

Lone parent, and children under 15

Lone parent, dependent students and non-dependent children

Lone parent, and dependent students

Lone parent, children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children

Lone parent, children under 15, dependent students

Lone parent, and non-dependent children

Other family

**Output labels for the detailed group level**

Although most statistical collections will only output the first three levels of the classification, the detailed group level is available for output in surveys collecting more detailed family data.

**Couple with children**

Couple, children under 15, non-dependent children, and relatives

Couple, children under 15, and non-dependent children only

Couple, children under 15, and relatives

Couple, and children under 15 only

Couple, dependent students, non-dependent children, and relatives

Couple, dependent students, and non-dependent children only

Couple, dependent students, and relatives

Couple, and dependent students only

Couple, children under 15, dependent students, non-dependent children, and relatives

Couple, children under 15, dependent students, and non-dependent children only

Couple, children under 15, dependent students, and relatives

Couple, children under 15, and dependent students only

Couple, non-dependent children, and relatives

Couple, and non-dependent children only

**Couple without children**

Couple, without children, and with relatives

Couple only

**One parent family**

Lone parent, children under 15, non-dependent children, and relatives

Lone parent, children under 15, and non-dependent children only

Lone parent, children under 15, and relatives

Lone parent, and children under 15 only

Lone parent, dependent students, non-dependent children, and relatives

Lone parent, dependent students, and non-dependent children only

Lone parent, dependent students, and relatives

Lone parent, and dependent students only

Lone parent, children under 15, dependent students, non-dependent children, and  
relatives

Lone parent, children under 15, dependent students, and non-dependent children only

Lone parent, children under 15, dependent students, and relatives

Lone parent, children under 15, and dependent students only

Lone parent, non-dependent children, and relatives

Lone parent, and non-dependent children only

**Other family**

Other family

Output at more than one level of the classification

**Output labels for super groups and major groups**

Couple family with children  
under 15  
dependent students  
under 15 and dependent students  
with non-dependent children

Couple family without children

One parent family  
with children under 15  
with dependent students  
with children under 15 and dependent students  
with non-dependent children

Other family

**Output labels for super groups, major groups and minor groups**

Couple family with children  
under 15  
and non-dependents  
without non-dependents  
dependent students  
and non-dependents  
without non-dependents  
under 15 and dependent students  
and non-dependents  
without non-dependents  
with non-dependent children

Couple family without children

One parent family  
with children under 15  
and non-dependents  
without non-dependents  
with dependent students  
and non-dependents  
without non-dependents  
with children under 15 and dependent students  
and non-dependents  
without non-dependents  
with non-dependent children

Other family



**Output labels for super groups, major groups, minor groups and detailed level**

Couple family with children  
under 15

- and non-dependents
- and relatives
- without relatives
- without non-dependents
- and relatives
- without relatives

- dependent students
- and non-dependents
- and relatives
- without relatives
- without non-dependents
- and relatives
- without relatives

- under 15 and dependent students
- and non-dependents
- and relatives
- without relatives
- without non-dependents
- and relatives
- without relatives

- with non-dependent children
- and relatives
- without relatives

Couple family without children

- with relatives
- without relatives

**Output labels for super groups, major groups, minor groups and detailed level**

One parent family

- with children under 15  
and non-dependents  
and relatives  
without relatives  
without non-dependents  
and relatives  
without relatives

- with dependent students  
and non-dependents  
and relatives  
without relatives  
without non-dependents  
and relatives  
without relatives

- with children under 15 and dependent students  
and non-dependents  
and relatives  
without relatives  
without non-dependents  
and relatives  
without relatives

- with non-dependent children  
and relatives  
without relatives

Other family

## Output categories and code structure for same-sex couples

It is envisaged that the *type of couple identifier* (whether a same-sex or opposite-sex couple) will generally be used only in conjunction with the super group level (level 1). However, if data quality permits, it may be applied at any level of the classification. The dissemination of data about opposite-sex and same-sex couples at more detailed levels will depend upon the willingness of people to identify themselves in these categories and upon the sample size of the collection.

The numbers 5, 6, 7, 8 can be added to the first, second, third or fourth digits of the family type code to produce aggregate output on same-sex couples at the required level of the classification. For example, aggregate data relating to same-sex couples at the broadest level can be produced using the following codes:

- 1 Couple family with children
  - 15 Opposite-sex couple with children
  - 16 Same-sex couple with children (not further defined)
- 2 Couple family without children
  - 25 Opposite-sex couple without children
  - 26 Same-sex couple without children (not further defined)
- 3 One parent family
- 9 Other family

Or as an alternative the data may be output in the following structure:

- 1 Couple family with children
  - 15 Opposite-sex couple with children
  - 17 Same-sex male couple with children
  - 18 Same-sex female couple with children
- 2 Couple family without children
  - 25 Opposite-sex couple without children
  - 27 Same-sex male couple without children
  - 28 Same-sex female couple without children
- 3 One parent family
- 9 Other family

## **Supporting variables**

The ABS recommends the following set of seven supporting variables for use in conjunction with the standard classification to facilitate broader analysis of family data.

**1. Social marital status of couple family:**

*Registered married*

*De facto married*

**2. Sex of oldest parent (or oldest person in families with no couple or parent-child relationships):**

*Male*

*Female*

**3. Family size (number of persons)**

*2-99*

**4. Number of dependent children present**

*0*

*1*

*2*

*3*

*4*

*5*

*6*

*7*

*8 or more*

**5. Age of youngest child present (years)**

*Age*

*No children present*

**6. Age of female partner (in couple family), of female parent (in a one parent family) or age of oldest female person (in other family)**

*Age*

**7. Age of male partner (in couple family), of male parent (in a one parent family) or age of oldest male person (in other family)**

*Age*

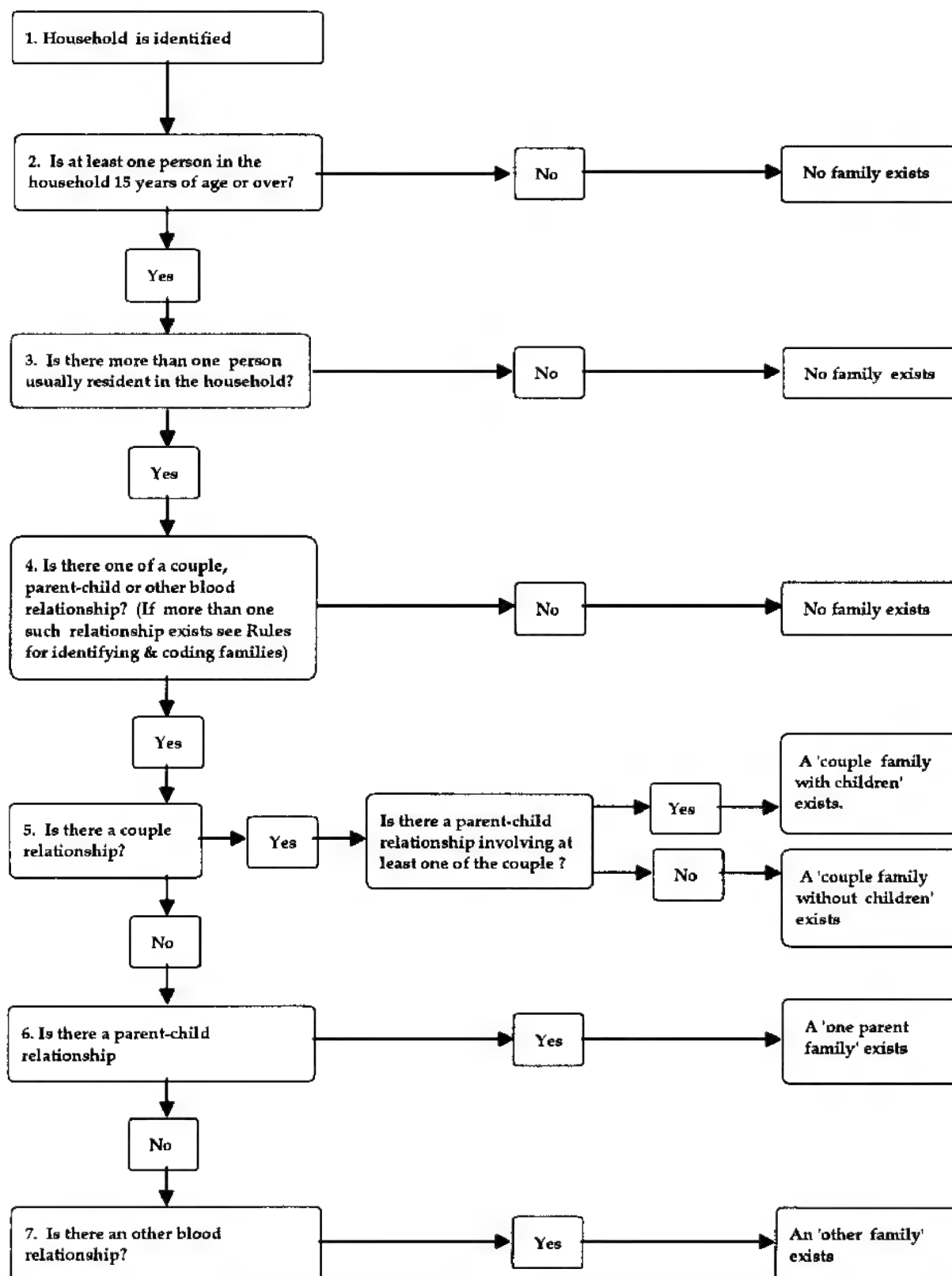
Where more detailed family information is useful, additional supporting variables can be formulated as required. For example where economic information about families is the focus (such as in the ABS Monthly Labour Force Survey; Income, Housing Costs and Housing Amenities Survey 1989-90 and the Household Expenditure Survey 1993-94), additional variables could include: number of full and part-time income earners, family income, labour force status of partners in couple families and of lone parents, hours worked, and/or occupation.

Other social characteristics besides those mentioned above that may be useful for cross-tabulation are educational qualifications of male and female partners in couple families and of lone parents, and birthplace.

### **Family Type flow chart**

The flow chart on the following page presents the Family Type at the super group level. It is a visual representation of the classification criteria as applied at the super group level, not a chart of the complete derivation process used to construct family type.

## Flow chart displaying Family Type at the super group level



# 5

## Standards for Statistics on Household Type

### Introduction

The concept of *household* is fundamental in the production of social and labour statistics. It is one of the basic units of social statistical aggregation and is used as a data collection vehicle in many statistical collections. In the ABS, many social, labour and demographic surveys are household-based, including the Census of Population and Housing, and the Labour Force Survey. The *Household Type* standards presented in this chapter have been developed to facilitate the collection, classification and dissemination of household-based statistics.

Broadly speaking, Household Type is expressed in terms of the number and composition of families within households. Therefore, in order to determine Household Type the relationship of household members to each other and the existence or absence of familial relationships must be considered. This is established through the use of the Relationship in Household and Family Type variables (see *Chapters 3 and 4*). Household Type is also indirectly associated to the Marital Status variable (see *Chapter 6*).

Household Type data are used to provide estimates on the number and composition of Australian households and to identify various groups of people within the population, such as people living in multifamily households or people living alone. When cross-classified with other variables, such as income, Household Type data provides information about the social well-being of groups of people with similar characteristics.

## Descriptive title

The ABS standard title for this variable and its associated classification is *Household Type*. This title was used in the 1986 and 1991 Population Censuses, the 1992 Survey of Families in Australia and is used in the Monthly Population Survey. However, *Family Composition of Household* has been used in the Household Expenditure Survey. The ABS will use the standard title (Household Type) in all future collections and encourages its use in all statistical applications.

## Definition

Before presenting a definition of Household Type, the definition of a household is as follows:

*a group of two or more related or unrelated people who usually reside in the same dwelling, who regard themselves as a household and who make common provision for food or other essentials for living; or a person living in a dwelling who makes provision for his or her own food and other essentials for living, without combining with any other person.*

For further information, this definition of a household is discussed in Chapter 1 - *Overview of Family Variables*, pp 6-7.

*Household Type* is the primary descriptor of the composition of a household in terms of the relationship of all usual residents of the household to one another. The definition of *household* is the basis from which the definition of *Household Type* is derived. The definition of Household Type is as follows:

*Household Type is used to describe and categorise households on the basis of the number of families present, and whether or not unrelated household members are present (if it is a family household), or the number of household members (if it is a non-family household).*

It should be noted that only usual residents of a household are considered when describing and categorising households by Household Type. Since households are differentiated in terms of families, and visitors to a household are excluded from family coding, the identification of usual residence is essential to determine Household Type. For a discussion of usual residence see Chapter 1 - *Overview of Family Variables*, p 9.

Similarly, by ABS definition, families only exist when one or more members of a household are 15 years or over. Therefore, if a household does not contain at least one member 15 years or over it cannot be described in terms of Household Type.



## Classification criteria

The differentiation of households into household types allows households to be described in terms of a standard set of classification categories. Each household can be assigned to a particular category of the classification on the basis of a standard set of classification criteria.

There are four criteria used to group households according to Household Type. These are:

- The presence or absence of families in a household;
- The number of families in a household;
- The number of families with non-family members present; and
- The number of household members in a non-family household.

## Application of the criteria

To determine the Household Type of a particular household the relationship of all household members to one another must be identified. This allows identification of the composition of a household in terms of the number of families and unrelated household members present. This information is obtained by applying the standards for Relationship in Household and Family Type to the details provided by household members about their household composition (see *Chapters 3 and 4*).

Households are then grouped into categories of Household Type by applying the classification criteria: the presence of families, the number of families, the presence of unrelated household members, and the number of household members in a non-family household.

## Classification and code structure

The Household Type Classification consists of two levels. The first level groups households into family households and non-family households. The second level groups households on the basis of the number of families or household members present in each household.

One- and two-digit codes are assigned to the first and second level of the classification respectively. The one-digit codes allow the logical identification of the broad categories of family and non-family households. The two-digit codes allow the identification of categories of family or non-family households grouped according to the numbers of families or household members present.

- 1 Family household with only family members present
  - 11 One family household
  - 12 Two family household
  - 13 Three or more family household
- 2 Family household with non-family members present
  - 21 One family household with non-family members present
  - 22 Two family household with non-family members present
  - 23 Three or more family household with non-family members present
- 3 Non-family household
  - 31 Lone person household
  - 32 Group household
- 9 Not classifiable
  - 90 Not classifiable (not further defined)
  - 91 Visitor only dwelling
  - 92 Other not classifiable
- 0 Not stated/Inadequately described
  - 00 Not stated/Inadequately described

The *Not classifiable* category is reserved for those dwellings where households have not been identified, either because all of the individuals present are visitors, or because all of the individuals are under 15 years old. If users do not wish to collect this level of detail then the category 90 Not classifiable (not further defined) can be used.

In the classification, only households with one or two families are separately identified because the number of households comprising 3 families is insignificant and their separate identification from households with 4 or more families is not warranted.

Certain types of household members play a distinctive role in household type coding, depending on whether they are related or unrelated to a family. If a family is present in a household, any other related individuals are allocated to the family and play no further role in determining household type. The presence of non-family household members, however, does lead to the differentiation between household types.

It should be noted that the Household Type classification does not distinguish between multifamily households where the families are related to each other and multifamily households where the families are not related to each other. If information making this distinction is required, it should be derived as a separate variable.

### **Questionnaire module**

There is no specific questionnaire module for the Household Type variable as it is based on data collected for the derivation of the Relationship in Household and Family Type variables. The standard questionnaire modules for these variables are outlined in Chapter 2 - *Relationship Questionnaire Modules for Family Variables*.

## **Output classifications**

In order that the full range of household structures are represented in statistical output, it is anticipated that most users and producers of household statistics will present data using the full classification structure. If output is to be presented in a nested or hierarchical manner, then the standard output categories are:

Family households (family members only)

One family

Two families

Three or more families

Family households (non-family members present)

One family

Two families

Three or more families

Non-family households

Lone person household

Group household

Not classifiable

Visitor only dwelling

Other not classifiable

Not stated/Inadequately described

If output is to be presented at one level only the standard output labels at level 1 for this option are:

Family households (family members only)

Family households (non-family members present)

Non-family households

Not classifiable

Not stated/Inadequately described

The standard output labels at level 2 for this option are:

One family household (family members only)  
 Two family household (family members only)  
 Three or more family household (family members only)

One family household (non-family members present)  
 Two family household (non-family members present)  
 Three or more family household (non-family members present)

Lone person household  
 Group household

Visitor only dwelling\*  
 Other not classifiable\*

Not stated/Inadequately described

\* These categories may be aggregated in output as 'Not classifiable'.

The two-level structure of the classification allows users the flexibility to present alternative output structures if required. For instance, an alternative standard output option is the aggregation of families with and without non-family members present. If output is to be presented in a nested or hierarchical manner, then the standard output categories are:

Family households  
   One family  
   Two families  
   Three families or more

Non-family households  
   Lone person household  
   Group household

Not classifiable  
   Visitor only dwelling  
   Other not classifiable

Not stated/Inadequately described

If output is to be presented at one level only the standard output labels at level 1 for this option are:

- Family households
- Non-family households
- Not classifiable
- Not stated/Inadequately described

and the standard output labels at level 2 for this option are:

- One family household
- Two family household
- Three or more family household
- Lone person household
- Group household
- Visitor only dwelling
- Other not classifiable
- Not stated/Inadequately described

## 6

# Standards for Statistics on Marital Status

### Introduction

Marital Status is a core variable in a wide range of social, labour and demographic statistics. Its main purpose is to establish the living arrangements of couples in the Australian population. These arrangements may be based on a registered marriage or on a social, marriage-like arrangement (ie. a de facto marriage). As there is considerable community interest in both registered marital status and social living arrangements, two separate concepts of marital status have been developed as ABS standards - *registered marital status* and *social marital status*.

### Two marital status classifications

One of the major benefits of having two marital status classifications is that they can be used together to provide mutually exclusive categories which allow an individual's registered marital status and current living arrangements to be fully described. For example, an individual who is currently living in a de facto marriage and is separated from a previous registered marriage would be coded as *separated* in the Registered Marital Status classification and *de facto* in the Social Marital Status classification.

As the two concepts aim to measure different personal relationship characteristics, they serve different purposes and are treated in these standards as independent variables with separate classifications. It is thus possible to use the two variables independently, or to cross-classify them, depending on the purposes of the analysis.

Social marital status is recommended for most applications

Although data on registered marital status are still used widely in the community, social marital status is increasingly accepted as the more widely used marital status concept. There are two reasons why the ABS recommends that *social marital status* be collected in all situations where information on marital status is sought. First, the information on living arrangements derived from the Social Marital Status classification is essential for identifying and classifying family type data. Second, the emphasis on the collection of data on social marital status is also in accordance with recommendations made by international bodies, including the United Nations.

## REGISTERED MARITAL STATUS

### Descriptive title

The ABS encourages the use of *registered marital status* as the descriptive title for this variable. The alternative term *legal marital status* is not recommended because de facto marriages are recognised in some legislation and this may confuse respondents or users of the statistics. Similarly, other alternative terminologies, including *de jure marital status*, are not recommended.

### Definition

Registered marital status is a person's relationship status in terms of whether he or she has, or has had, a registered marriage with another person with whom he or she holds, or held, a valid marriage certificate.



## Classification criteria

A person's registered marital status may be described in terms of a standard set of classification categories. Each person's registered marital status can be assigned to a particular category of the classification on the basis of the criteria detailed below.

The Registered Marital Status classification applies to all persons aged fifteen years and over. Partners in a registered marriage must be of the opposite sex as same-sex couples cannot, by law, be registered as married or hold a marriage certificate with each other.

Four criteria are used to determine a person's current registered marital status:

- whether he or she is now, or has been in a registered marriage
- whether his or her most recent registered marriage partner is still living
- whether she or he remains legally married to her or his most recent registered marriage partner
- his or her living arrangements with his or her most recent registered marriage partner

## Application of the criteria

These criteria are applied to each person's couple relationship status to produce the following mutually exclusive categories:

**Never married:** a person who has never been a partner in a registered marriage.

**Widowed:** a person whose spouse in a registered marriage has died and who has not remarried.

**Divorced:** a person who has formally ended his or her registered marriage by legal means and who has not remarried. This category includes persons who have obtained a decree nisi.

**Separated:** a person who is a partner in a registered marriage, has parted from his or her spouse and is unlikely to re-unite with him or her, but who has not divorced.

**Married:** a person who is a partner in a registered marriage, who holds a valid marriage certificate and has not *separated* from his or her spouse. The spouse does not need to be a usual resident of the same household.

## **Classification and code structure**

The classification categories and code structure are as follows:

### **Registered marital status**

- 1 Never married
- 2 Widowed
- 3 Divorced
- 4 Separated
- 5 Married
- 0 Not stated/Inadequately described

In a self-enumerated collection, if both separated and married are ticked then the response is to be coded as separated.

## **Questionnaire module**

The following question format and ordering of response options is recommended to collect data on registered marital status:

**What is ...'s marital status?**

- ☐ **Never married**
- ☐ **Widowed**
- ☐ **Divorced**
- ☐ **Separated**
- ☐ **Married**

The words *legal* and *registered* are not recommended

The words *legal* and *registered* are not recommended in the context of this question, as some de facto marriages are recognised legally and/or registered with some government departments (such as the Australian Taxation Office, Department of Social Security).

### Prompts help clarify categories

When using personal interview collection methodologies a prompt card system may be used to show the respondent the alternative responses. Using this method, or a self-enumeration form with tick box response categories, respondents are more likely to interpret the question as applying to *registered marital status* for which a marriage certificate is held, and not a *de facto* marriage. In interview-based collections, where prompt cards are not used, a prompt statement should be devised for use when *de facto* is given as the initial response.

### An additional question can be asked to improve data quality

In surveys where registered marital status is of major analytical significance, the following additional question may be used to screen the *de facto* marriages to achieve a more precise measure of the concept:

When did ... get married?

Year: \_ \_ \_ \_

This will identify many respondents who do report a *de facto* marriage as a registered marriage, as these respondents usually do not give a precise date.

### Alternative labels for categories

One problem with the recommended category labels for the questionnaire module is that *separated* and *married* may not seem to be mutually exclusive to a respondent due to the fact that in legal terms a *separated* person is still formally married. The ordering of the categories has been used to address this problem. Thus by placing *separated* before *married* it is anticipated that respondents will generally give the correct response. An alternative solution to the problem would be to use a more descriptive category label for *married* such as *married (but not separated)*.

## **Output classification**

Output categories of registered marital status are the same five categories listed in the classification and code structure:

### **Registered marital status**

Never married  
Widowed  
Divorced  
Separated  
Married

## SOCIAL MARITAL STATUS

### Descriptive title

The term *social marital status* is recommended for this variable. The alternative term *living arrangements* is not recommended as it can also be related to wider household relationships (for example, whether the respondent lives alone or with others) and is thus confusing. Similarly, *marital partnership*, *consensual union*, *consensual marital status*, *cohabitation status*, *partnership status*, *whether partnered*, *whether living with a partner* and *de facto marital status* are not recommended.

### Definition

Social marital status is a person's relationship status in terms of whether she or he forms a *couple relationship* with another person.

*A couple relationship is based on a consensual union, and is defined as two people usually residing in the same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond usually associated with marriage, and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union. This relationship is identified by the presence of a registered marriage or de facto marriage.*

In most statistical collections it is not practical to ask questions which will determine whether bonding usually associated with marriage exists between two people. Accordingly, two individuals are regarded as a couple if both are reported as being usually resident in the same household and living together in either a registered or de facto marriage. The formalisation of these living arrangements through a ceremony is not necessary.

In practice, a consensual union is deemed to exist when the relationship between two people usually resident in the same household is reported as: *husband, wife, spouse, partner, de facto, common law husband/wife/spouse, lover, boyfriend, girlfriend*. Any relationship label which indicates that a consensual union exists is accepted by the interviewers, unless the relationship is further qualified by the respondent to indicate that he or she does not consider that a couple relationship has been formed. For example, the respondent may indicate that a person is their *boyfriend* and then go on to say "but, we aren't de factos", in which case the individuals would be treated as unrelated to each other. The word *friend* on its own is not sufficient evidence that a consensual union exists.

The concept of *couple relationship* is restricted to the usual residents in a household. This ensures that data is only collected on relationships between people *living together* in marriage or marriage-like relationships. A relationship between a person usually resident in one household and a person usually resident in another is not recognised as a marriage in the Social Marital Status classification.

### **Classification criteria**

The social marital status concept applies to all persons aged fifteen years and over.

A person's social marital status can be described in terms of a standard set of classification categories. Each person's social marital status can be assigned to a particular category of the classification on the basis of the three criteria listed below:

- whether a person is living with a partner in a couple relationship - such a person is regarded as being married,
- whether a person is living with a partner in a registered marriage, and
- whether a person in a couple relationship is living with a person of the same sex.

### **Application of the criteria**

These criteria are applied to each person's couple relationship status to produce the major categories of the Social Marital Status classification as defined below :

**Married:** a person who is living with another person in a couple relationship. This relationship has been reported as either a registered marriage, or a de facto marriage.

**Not married:** a person who is not living with another person in a couple relationship. This includes persons who live alone, with other family members, and those in shared accommodation; it also includes persons who are in a registered marriage or in a de facto marriage, but whose partners are not usually resident in the household.

**Married in a registered marriage:** a person who lives with another person in a couple relationship and this relationship has been reported as a registered marriage.

In practice, a person is classified to this category if his or her relationship to another person (of the opposite sex) usually resident in the same household is reported as: *husband, wife or spouse*, and the registered marital status of both partners (if also asked in the collection) is reported as *married*.

**Married in a de facto marriage:** a person who lives with another person in a couple relationship and this relationship is not a registered marriage.

In practice, a de facto marriage exists when the relationship between two people who are usual residents in the same household is reported as: *partner, de facto, common law husband/wife/spouse, lover, boyfriend, girlfriend etc.*; or when their relationship is reported as *husband, wife or spouse* and the registered marital status of one or both partners (if also asked in the collection) is reported as a category other than *married*. If terms such as *husband, wife, spouse* are used for same-sex couples the relationship is deemed to be a *de facto marriage* due to the fact that same-sex couple relationships cannot be registered marriages.

### Traditional Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin marriages

The ABS recommends that partners in traditional Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander marriages should be coded as *Married in a registered marriage*, not *Married in a de facto marriage*, even though traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander marriages are not registrable marriages under the Commonwealth Marriage Act 1961. This should not be a significant statistical issue for most collections.

## Classification and code structure

The classification and code structure for social marital status is a four level hierarchical structure, as follows:

### Social marital status

- 1 Married
  - 10 Married (not further defined)
  - 11 Married in a registered marriage
  - 12 Married in a de facto marriage (not further defined)
    - 15 Married in a de facto marriage, opposite-sex couple
    - 16 Married in a de facto marriage, same-sex couple
    - 17 Married in a de facto, male same-sex couple
    - 18 Married in a de facto marriage, female same-sex couple
- 2 Not married
  - 21 Not married
- 9 Not stated/Inadequately described
  - 98 Not stated/Inadequately described

This classification uses a two-digit code structure rather than a four-digit code, which would usually be recommended for what is essentially a four level hierarchical classification structure. This is recommended as it makes data storage and coding more efficient. Specifically, a two-digit code reduces the number of entry key strokes and the amount of data storage space required in processing the data. The two-digit code structure also allows consistency in the coding of de facto couples (using the digits 5, 6, 7 and 8) with the Relationship in Household and Family Type classifications. For further information on this procedure see the discussion on the type of couple identifier in Chapter 4 - *Standards for Statistics on Family Type*, pp 48-50, 63.

### Edits necessary to derive social marital status

If *registered marital status* is collected in addition to *social marital status*, responses to the *registered marital status* question should be used to check that respondents have correctly reported the nature of their relationship for the Social Marital Status classification. Specifically, if a couple form a consensual union and one of the partners is reported as being other than *married* for the Registered Marital Status classification, the *social marital status* of both partners should be coded as *de facto marriage* regardless of their individual response. For example, in the table below, if in the Relationship in Household question Person 2 states they are the *spouse* of Person 1, and Person 1 is reported as *separated* for the Registered Marital



Status classification, then both partners should be coded as *de facto* for the Social Marital Status classification.

	Relationship in Household	(Registered) Marital Status
Person 1	Self	Separated
Person 2	Spouse of Person 1	Married

### Recommended input categories

Social marital status data should be recorded and stored at the most detailed level of the classification. The recommended input categories are thus:

#### Social marital status

- 10 Married, not further defined
- 11 Married, in a registered marriage
- 15 Married, in a de facto marriage, opposite-sex couple
- 17 Married, in a de facto marriage, male same-sex couple
- 18 Married, in a de facto marriage, female same-sex couple
- 21 Not married
- 98 Not stated/Inadequately described

### Questionnaire module

To accurately measure social marital status, all consensual unions within a household must be identified and described in terms of whether they are a registered marriage, an opposite sex de facto marriage, a male same-sex de facto marriage or a female same-sex de facto marriage. This requires information on *relationship in household, sex and sex of partner*.

Consensual unions are identified through the use of a relationship question as outlined in Chapter 2 - *Relationship Questionnaire Modules*. *Sex* and *Sex of partner* are obtained through the use of separate standards outlined in *Standards for Statistics on Age and Sex* (1285.0). Information on *age* and *usual residency* are also required to determine whether the relationships are within the scope of the classification.

## Output classifications

Social marital status may be output in either an aggregate or non-aggregate format. The aggregate format consists of two categories; *Married* and *Not Married*. In its expanded form the categories are as follows:

### Social marital status

#### Married

in a registered marriage

in a de facto marriage

#### Not married

Output at a finer level of detail than the above categories is not recommended as standard output for most applications. The ability to produce meaningful statistics for categories at the more detailed levels of the classification will be dependent on the numbers of same-sex couple relationships which are reported in individual statistical collections. In the ABS it is anticipated that only the Census of Population and Housing is likely to provide sufficiently detailed data.

## Using both registered and social marital status

Clear labels and footnotes are important

The ABS recommends that, in publications and discussions where both marital status concepts are addressed, clear labels and footnotes should be used to differentiate registered marital status categories from social marital status categories.

Footnotes are particularly recommended to state that:

- married includes de facto marriages for the Social Marital Status classification but excludes de facto marriages for the Registered Marital Status classification.
- the category *married in a de facto marriage* for the Social Marital Status classification includes same-sex couples.
- the term *not married* when used in relation to social marital status includes persons who are not currently living with their registered marriage spouse or with a de facto partner.

In addition, definitions for the concepts and categories should be listed in a glossary of terms. These should be consistent with those outlined in the glossary of this publication. In some instances, there may be a need for explanatory notes to further clarify the concepts.

The ABS strongly discourages the use of the term *not married* in relation to the Registered Marital Status classification, particularly when used in conjunction with the Social Marital Status classification. Instead, the use of the term *not registered married* should be used as this helps to avoid confusion with the *not married* category of the Social Marital Status classification. As such, the term *not registered married* includes persons *never married*, *widowed* or *divorced* regardless of whether they are living in a de facto marriage.

If the term *not married* is used in a table where the data refer to registered marital status, it should be footnoted as follows:

Refers to persons whose registered marital status is *Never Married*, *Widowed* or *Divorced*, including those who are living with a de facto partner.

The term *ever married* can be used to refer to all persons whose registered marital status is other than *never married*.

## Cross-classifying registered and social marital status

It is not anticipated that many collections will present data cross-tabulated in this way. However, when this is necessary, the following format is recommended for output tables:

Registered marital status	Social marital status		
	Married		Not married
	Registered	De facto	
Never married			
Widowed			
Divorced			
Separated			
Married		(a)	(b)

(a) This category includes individuals still in a registered marriage who have formed a de facto marriage with another person.

(b) This category includes individuals whose spouse is not a usual resident for some reason but still considers himself or herself *married*.

It is not possible to have data for these categories

The following output structure is recommended when registered marital status is cross-classified by social marital status:

Registered marriage  
Married

De facto marriage  
Never married  
Widowed  
Divorced  
Separated  
Registered married (a)

Not married  
Never married  
Widowed  
Divorced  
Separated  
Registered married (b)

(a) This category includes individuals still in a registered marriage who have formed a de facto marriage with another person.

(b) This category includes individuals whose spouse is not a usual resident for some reason but still considers himself or herself *married*.

## Appendix 1

### Definitions of the classification categories

The following scope statements are presented as brief definitions for each of the categories of the Relationship in Household, the Family Type and the Household Type classification. They are presented in the structure of each of the relevant classifications. Definitions of the categories of the Marital Status classification can be found in Chapter 6 - *Standards for Statistics on Marital Status*.

#### **Categories within the Relationship in Household classification**

##### **Husband, wife or partner in a registered marriage**

A person living with another person in a couple relationship, such relationship being a registered marriage.

In practice, a person is classified as being a *Husband, wife or partner in a registered marriage* if his or her relationship to another person (of the opposite sex), usually resident in the same household is reported in the relationship in household question as husband, wife or spouse, and the Registered Marital Status of both partners (if also asked in the collection) is reported as registered married. Under Australian law same-sex couples cannot be registered as married and are therefore out of scope for this category.

**Husband, wife or partner in a de facto marriage**

A person living with another person in a couple relationship. This relationship is not a registered marriage.

In practice, a person is defined as being a *Husband, wife or partner in a de facto marriage* when the relationship between two people, of the opposite sex or same sex, who live together in the same household is reported in the relationship in household questions as: partner, de facto or common law husband/wife/spouse, lover, boyfriend, girlfriend; or when, for opposite sex couples, their relationship is reported as husband/wife/spouse and either the marital status of one or both partners is not reported as registered married.

**Opposite-sex couple**

Two persons of the opposite sex who are usually resident in the same household and form a couple relationship.

**Same-sex couple**

Two persons of the same sex who are usually resident in the same household and form a couple relationship.

**Lone parent**

A person who has no spouse or partner present in the household but who forms a parent-child relationship with at least one dependent or non-dependent child usually resident in the household.

**Child under 15**

A related or unrelated person under 15 years of age who forms a parent-child relationship with a person over 15 years of age usually resident in the household.

**Child under 15 (not further defined)**

This category is appropriate for collections which do not separately identify the types of children under the age of fifteen. It is also appropriate for instances where the quality of the response is not sufficient to allocate a more specific code. Thus it will not be clear from the response whether the child is a step-child or a natural, adopted, foster, otherwise related or unrelated child under 15.

**Natural or adopted child under 15**

In practice, any response given on the relationship in household question which indicates that the child is a natural or an adopted child, who is under the age of fifteen and usually resident in the household will be included in this category, provided they do not form a parent-child relationship with anyone else in the household.

### **Step-child under 15**

A step-son or step-daughter to either of the partners in a couple family or the step-son or step-daughter of a lone parent in a one-parent family. This child is usually resident in the household and under the age of 15.

### **Foster child under 15**

A foster child is a person who lives with a person or persons who are not his or her natural, adoptive or step parent(s). This child is usually resident in the household and under the age of 15.

Operationally, a person is considered a foster child if the response 'foster' is given for that person, regardless of the individual's dependency status.

### **Otherwise related child under 15**

This refers to any child under 15 who is a usual resident, is related to a member of the household, and is not the natural, adopted, step or foster child of anyone else in the household. This includes nephews, nieces, grandsons, grand-daughters, etc. who have not formed a parent-child relationship with anyone else in the household.

### **Unrelated child under 15**

Any unrelated person under the age of 15 who is usually resident in the household will be included in this category because it is assumed that they must be dependent upon someone.

### **Dependent student**

A natural, adopted, step, or foster child who is 15-24 years of age, who attends a secondary or tertiary educational institution as a full-time student and who has no partner or child of his or her own usually resident in the same household. This category can be further differentiated based on the type of parent-child relationship.

#### **Dependent student (not further defined)**

This category is appropriate for collections which do not separately identify the types of children aged 15-24 who are full-time students. It is also appropriate for instances where the quality of the response is not sufficient to allocate a more specific code. Thus it will not be clear from the response whether the child is a step-child or is a natural, adopted, or foster child.

### **Natural or adopted dependent student**

In practice, if any response is given to the relationship in household question which indicates that the person is a natural or an adopted child, aged between 15-24, studying full-time at a secondary or tertiary institution, and usually resident in the household, that person will be included in this category.

### **Student step-child**

A step-son or step-daughter to either of the partners in a couple family or the step-son or step-daughter of a lone parent in a one-parent family, who is aged 15-24, studying full-time at a secondary or tertiary institution, and a usual resident of the household.

### **Student foster child**

A foster child aged 15-24 who is studying full-time at a secondary or tertiary institution. A foster child is a person who lives with a person or persons who are not his or her natural, adoptive or step parent(s).

Operationally, a person is considered a foster child if the response 'foster' is given for that person, regardless of the individual's dependency status.

### **Non-dependent child**

A natural, step, adopted or foster child of a couple or lone parent usually resident in the household, aged over 15 years and who is not a full-time student aged 15-24 years, and has no partner or child of his or her own usually resident in the household. This category can be further differentiated based on the type of parent-child relationship.

#### **Non-dependent child (not further defined)**

This category is appropriate for collections which do not separately identify the types of children who are not dependent upon their parent(s). Thus it will not be clear from the response whether the child is a step-child or a natural, adopted or foster child.

#### **Non-dependent natural or adopted child**

In practice, if any response is given to the relationship in household question which indicates that the person is a natural or adopted child of a couple or lone parent, is usually resident in the household, aged over 15 years, is not a full-time student aged 15-24 years, and has no partner or child of his or her own usually resident in the household then that person will be included in this category.

#### **Non-dependent step-child**

A step-son or step-daughter to either of the partners in a couple family or the step-son or step-daughter of a lone parent in a one-parent family. This person is also usually resident in the household, fifteen years or over, not a full-time student



aged 15-24, and has no partner or child of his or her own usually resident in the household.

#### **Non-dependent foster child**

A foster child is a person who lives with a person or persons who are not his or her natural, adoptive or step parent(s). This person is also usually resident in the household, fifteen years or over, not a full-time student aged 15-24, and has no partner or child of his or her own usually resident in the household.

Operationally, a person is considered a foster child if the response 'foster' is given for that person, regardless of the individual's dependency status.

#### **Other related individual**

This category refers to relationships between individuals usually resident within the same household, other than a direct couple relationship or parent-child relationship. Any number of persons may be considered as an *Other related individual* if they are related to the family reference person by direct lineage, that is, from generation to generation. Grandmothers, great-grandmothers and even great-great-grandmothers, for example, are all considered as being related to the family reference person as are grandchildren and great-grandchildren, etc.

When relationships are considered horizontally, however, the definition is more restrictive and any relative beyond first cousin is not considered to be within the scope of this category.

This category is further differentiated by the types of relationship to the household/family reference person. A person who responds as a step or an in-law, and who does not form any other type of relationship, such as a couple or parent-child relationship, will be coded to the appropriate type of relationship in the other related individual categories. Thus if a household is composed of a reference person, wife, daughter, son, and mother-in-law, the mother-in-law will be coded to 62 Father/Mother.

#### **Other related individual (nfd)**

This category is appropriate for collections which do not separately identify the types of other related individuals who are present in the household. In collections which detail each of the types of related individuals, this category will contain responses where it was clear that the individual was a relative but their type of relationship could not be identified.

#### **Brother/Sister**

Includes: Brother, Step-brother, Half brother, Brother in-law, Sister, Step-sister, Half sister, Sister in-law

#### **Father/Mother**

Includes: Father, Step-father, Father in-law, Mother, Step-mother, Mother in-law

**Grandchild**

Includes: Grand-daughter, Step-grand-daughter, Grand-daughter in-law, Grandson, Step-grandson, Grandson in-law.

**Grandfather/Grandmother**

Includes: Grandfather, Step-grandfather, Grandfather in-law, Grandmother, Step-grandmother, Grandmother in-law.

**Cousin**

Includes: Cousin, Step-cousin, Cousin in-law

**Uncle/Aunt**

Includes: Uncle, Step-uncle, Uncle in-law, Aunt, Step-aunt, Aunt in-law

**Nephew/Niece**

Includes: Nephew, Step-nephew, Nephew in-law, Niece, Step-niece, Niece in-law

**Other related individual (nec)**

Includes great-grand relationships.

**Non-family member**

A *non-family member* is a person who does not fulfil any of the family criteria of couple relationship, parent-child relationship or other blood relationship with any of the usual residents of the household. They may live within a family household or they may form a non-family household either as a lone person or a group household.

**Unrelated individual living in a family household**

A person who lives in a family household, but who is not related to any person in any of the families in the household. A boarder would fit into this category, provided he or she shares meals with the family.

**Group household member**

A person who lives with at least one other unrelated individual. As a minimum requirement for this category, one person in the household must be over the age of 15.

**Lone person**

A lone person may live in a dwelling on their own or share a dwelling with another individual or family. A lone person is one who makes provision for his or her food

or other essentials for living, without combining with any other person to form part of a multi-person household.

### **Visitor**

Visitors are within the scope of the Relationship in Household classification and are assigned a separate category, but they are, by definition, excluded from family coding. The distinction between visitors and usual residents is made in the Relationship in Household classification to ensure that families comprise only those persons usually resident in the same household.

## **Categories within the Family Type Classification**

### **Family Type categories at the super group level**

#### **Couple family with children**

This category refers to a couple family who have children present in the family. It can be expanded to elaborate on the characteristics of those children, such as the type of dependent children present, or the presence of non-dependent children. At its most detailed level, the category can also be used to indicate the presence of other related individuals.

#### **Couple family without children**

This category refers to a couple family with no dependent or non-dependent children present in the family. At its most detailed level, the category can be used indicate the presence or absence of other related individuals.

#### **One parent family**

A family consisting of a lone parent with at least one dependent or non-dependent *child* (regardless of age) who is also usually resident in the family. It can be expanded to elaborate on the characteristics of those children, such as the type of dependent children present, or the presence of non-dependent children. At its most detailed level, the category can also be used to indicate the presence of other related individuals.

Examples of one parent families include: a 25-year-old parent with dependent children; and an 80-year-old parent living with a 50-year-old child.

### **Other family**

A family of related individuals residing in the same household. These individuals do not form a couple or parent-child relationship with any other person in the household and are not attached to a couple or one parent family in the household.

If two brothers, for example, are living together and neither is a partner, a lone parent or a child to someone else in the household, then they are classified as an other family. However, if the two brothers share the household with the daughter of one of the brothers and her husband, then both brothers are classified as *other related individuals* and are attached to the couple family.

This category is the same at all levels of the classification.

### **Family Type categories at the major group level**

All the categories at the major group level can be further differentiated based on the presence or absence of *non-dependent children* and *other related individuals*.

#### **Couple family with children under 15**

This is a couple family where all dependent children present in the family are under the age of 15.

#### **Couple family with dependent students**

This is a couple family where all dependent children present in the family are dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time).

#### **Couple family with children under 15 and dependent students**

This is a couple family which has both types of dependent children present in the family: children under 15 and dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time).

#### **Couple family with non-dependent children**

This is a couple family without any dependent children but which does have non-dependent children present in the family.

#### **Couple family without children**

This is a couple family with no dependent or non-dependent children present in the family. At its most detailed level, the category can be used to indicate the presence or absence of other related individuals.

**One parent family with children under 15**

This is a one parent family where all dependent children present in the family are under the age of 15.

**One parent family with dependent students**

This is a one parent family where all dependent children present in the family are dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time).

**One parent family with children under 15 and dependent students**

This is a one parent family which has both types of dependent children present in the family: children under 15 and dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time).

**One parent family with non-dependent children**

This is a one parent family without any dependent children but which does have non-dependent children present in the family.

**Other family**

A family of other related individuals residing in the same household. These individuals do not form a couple or parent-child relationship with any other person in the household and are not attached to a couple or one parent family in the household.

If two brothers, for example, are living together and neither is a partner, a lone parent or a child to someone else in the household, then they are classified as an other family. However, if the two brothers share the household with the daughter of one of the brothers and her husband, then both brothers are classified as *other related individuals* and are attached to the couple family.

This category is the same at all levels of the classification.

## Family Type categories at the minor group level

All of these categories at the minor group level can be further differentiated based on the presence or absence of *other related individuals*.

### COUPLE FAMILIES

#### **Couple family with children under 15 and non-dependent children**

This is a couple family where all dependent children are under the age of 15 and with non-dependent children present in the family.

#### **Couple family with children under 15 and no non-dependent children**

This is a couple family where all dependent children are under the age of 15 and there are no other children present in the family.

#### **Couple family with dependent students and non-dependent children**

This is a couple family where all dependent children present in the family are dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time) and the family also includes non-dependent children.

#### **Couple family with dependent students and no non-dependent children**

This is a couple family where all dependent children present in the family are dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time) and there are no other children present in the family.

#### **Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children**

This is a couple family which has both types of dependent children present in the family: children under 15 and dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time) as well as non-dependent children.

#### **Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children**

This is a couple family which has both types of dependent children present in the family: children under 15 and dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time) but with no non-dependent children.

**Couple family with non-dependent children**

This is a couple family without any dependent children but which does have non-dependent children present in the family.

**Couple family without children**

This is a couple family with no dependent or non-dependent children present in the family.

**ONE PARENT FAMILIES**

**One parent family with children under 15 and non-dependent children**

This is a one parent family where all dependent children are under the age of 15 and with non-dependent children present.

**One parent family with children under 15 and no non-dependent children**

This is a one parent family where all dependent children are under the age of 15 and there are no other children present in the family.

**One parent family with dependent students and non-dependent children**

This is a one parent family where all dependent children are dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time) and with non-dependent children present.

**One parent family with dependent students and no non-dependent children**

This is a one parent family where all dependent children are dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time) and there are no other children present in the family.

**One parent family with children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children**

This is a one parent family which has both types of dependent children present in the family: children under 15 and dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time) as well as non-dependent children.

**One parent family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children**

This is a one parent family which has both types of dependent children present in the family: children under 15 and dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time) and no other children present.

**One parent family with non-dependent children**

This is a one parent family without any dependent children but which does have non-dependent children present in the family.

**OTHER FAMILIES**

**Other family**

A family of other related individuals residing in the same household. These individuals do not form a couple or parent-child relationship with any other person in the household and are not attached to a couple or one parent family in the household.

If two brothers, for example, are living together and neither is a partner, a lone parent or a child to someone else in the household, then they are classified as an other family. However, if the two brothers share the household with the daughter of one of the brothers and her husband, then both brothers are classified as *other related individuals* and are attached to the couple family.

This category is the same at all levels of the classification.



## Family Type classification categories at the detailed group level

### COUPLE FAMILIES

#### **Couple family with children under 15, non-dependent children and other related individuals**

This is a couple family where all dependent children are under the age of 15 and with non-dependent children and other related individuals present in the family.

#### **Couple family with children under 15, non-dependent children and no other related individuals**

This is a couple family where all dependent children are under the age of 15 and with non-dependent children but with no other related individuals present in the family.

#### **Couple family with children under 15, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals**

This is a couple family where all dependent children are under the age of 15 and there are no other children present in the family but there are other related individuals who live with the family.

#### **Couple family with children under 15, no non-dependent children and with no other related individuals**

This is a couple family where all dependent children are under the age of 15 and there are no other children present in the family and no other related individuals.

#### **Couple family with dependent students, non-dependent children and other related individuals**

This is a couple family where all dependent children present in the family are dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time) and the family also includes non-dependent children and other related individuals.

#### **Couple family with dependent students, non-dependent children and no other related individuals**

This is a couple family where all dependent children present in the family are dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time) and the family also includes non-dependent children but no other related individuals.

#### **Couple family with dependent students, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals**

This is a couple family where all dependent children present in the family are dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time) and there are no other children present

in the family. This family also includes other related individuals who live with the family.

**Couple family with dependent students, no non-dependent children and no other related individuals**

This is a couple family where all dependent children present in the family are dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time) and there are no other children or other related individuals present in the family.

**Couple family with children under 15, dependent students, non-dependent children and other related individuals**

This is a couple family which has both types of dependent children present in the family: children under 15 and dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time) as well as non-dependent children and other related individuals.

**Couple family with children under 15, dependent students, non-dependent children and no other related individuals**

This is a couple family which has both types of dependent children present in the family: children under 15 and dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time) as well as non-dependent children. This family does not have any other related individuals living with them.

**Couple family with children under 15, dependent students, no non-dependent children and other related individuals**

This is a couple family which has both types of dependent children present in the family: children under 15 and dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time) with no non-dependent children but with other related individuals present in the family.

**Couple family with children under 15, dependent students, no non-dependent children and no other related individuals**

This is a couple family which has both types of dependent children present in the family: children under 15 and dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time) but with no non-dependent children and no other related individuals present in the family.

This category is a couple with dependent children only.

**Couple family with non-dependent children and other related individuals**

This is a couple family without any dependent children but which does have non-dependent children present in the family. This family also includes other related individuals.

**Couple family with non-dependent children and no other related individuals**

This is a couple family which has non-dependent children present in the family but no other children or no other related individuals.

**Couple family without children and with other related individuals**

This is a couple family with no children present in the family but with other related individuals who live with the family.

**Couple family without children and no other related individuals**

This is a couple family with no children and no other related individuals present in the family. This category is a couple only family.

**ONE PARENT FAMILIES**

**One parent family with children under 15, non-dependent children and other related individuals**

This is a one parent family where all dependent children are under the age of 15 and with non-dependent children and other related individuals present.

**One parent family with children under 15, non-dependent children and no other related individuals**

This is a one parent family where all dependent children are under the age of 15 and with non-dependent children but with no other related individuals present.

This category is a one parent family with only children under 15 and non-dependent children present in the family.

**One parent family with children under 15, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals**

This is a one parent family where all dependent children are under the age of 15 and no other children are present in the family but other related individuals who live with the family.

**One parent family with children under 15, no non-dependent children and with no other related individuals**

This is a one parent family where all dependent children are under the age of 15 and there are no other children or other related individuals present in the family.

**One parent family with dependent students, non-dependent children, and other related individuals**

This is a one parent family where all dependent children are dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time), with non-dependent children and other related individuals present.

**One parent family with dependent students, non-dependent children, and no other related individuals**

This is a one parent family where all dependent children are dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time), and with non-dependent children, but with no other related individuals present.

This category is a one parent family which only has dependent students and non-dependent children in it.

**One parent family with dependent students, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals**

This is a one parent family where all dependent children are dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time) there are no non-dependent children present but there are other related individuals who live with this family.

**One parent family with dependent students, no non-dependent children and with no other related individuals**

This is a one parent family where all dependent children are dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time) there are no non-dependent children present and no other related individuals who live with this family.

This category is a one parent family which only has dependent students in it.

**One parent family with children under 15, dependent students, non-dependent children and other related individuals**

This is a one parent family which has both types of dependent children present in the family: children under 15 and dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time) as well as non-dependent children. This family also includes other related individuals.

**One parent family with children under 15, dependent students, non-dependent children and no other related individuals**

This is a one parent family which has both types of dependent children present in the family: children under 15 and dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time) as well as non-dependent children. This family does not have other related individuals living with the family.

**One parent family with children under 15, dependent students, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals**

This is a one parent family which has both types of dependent children present in the family: children under 15 and dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time), no other children present but with other related individuals who live with the family.

**One parent family with children under 15, dependent students, no non-dependent children and no other related individuals**

This is a one parent family which has both types of dependent children present in the family: children under 15 and dependent students (15-24 years old and studying full-time), no other children or other related individuals present.

This category is a one parent family which has only dependent children present.

**One parent family with non-dependent children and other related individuals**

This is a one parent family with non-dependent children, no dependent children but with other related individuals present in the family.

**One parent family with non-dependent children and no other related individuals**

This is a one parent family with non-dependent children, no dependent children and no other related individuals present in the family. This category is a one parent family with only non-dependent children present.

## OTHER FAMILIES

### Other family

A family of other related individuals residing in the same household. These individuals do not form a couple or parent-child relationship with any other person in the household and are not attached to a couple or one parent family in the household.

If two brothers, for example, are living together and neither is a partner, a lone parent or a child to someone else in the household, then they are classified as an other family. However, if the two brothers share the household with the daughter of one of the brothers and her husband, then both brothers are classified as *other related individuals* and are attached to the couple family.

This category is the same at all levels of the classification.

## **Categories within the Household Type Classification**

### **Family household with only family members present**

This is a household where all the usual residents are family members. The definition of family member is limited to persons who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering, and who are usually resident in the same household.

This category includes households which contain one family or more than one family and is further differentiated on the number of families in the household.

#### **One family household**

A household where all the usual residents are family members and only one family is present.

#### **Two family household**

A household where all the usual residents are family members and two families are present.

These families may or may not be related to each. This level of detail is not distinguished by the classification. If such information is required cross-classification with another variable would be necessary.

#### **Three or more family household**

A household where all the usual residents are family members and three or more families are present. As multifamily households comprise a relatively small part of the population, this category does not distinguish beyond three or more families.

These families may or may not be related to each other. This level of detail is not distinguished by the classification. If such information is required cross-classification with another variable would be necessary.

### **Family household with non-family members present**

This is a household which contains family members and at least one unrelated individual living with the family. This unrelated individual must share meals with the family in order to be regarded as part of the family household. If they do not share meals and are unrelated to any of the family members then they would be regarded as a lone person household.

This category includes households which contain one family or many families and is further differentiated on the number of families in the household.

**One family household with non-family members present**

A household which contains only one family and at least one unrelated individual who lives with the family.

**Two family household with non-family members present**

A household which contains two families and at least one unrelated individual who lives with one of the families.

These families may or may not be related to each other. This level of detail is not distinguished by the classification. If such information is required cross-classification with another variable would be necessary.

**Three or more family household with non-family members present**

A household which contains three or more families and at least one unrelated individual who lives with one of the families. As multifamily households are relatively small part of the population this category does not distinguish beyond three or more families.

These families may or may not be related to each other. This level of detail is not distinguished by the classification. If such information is required cross-classification with another variable would be necessary.

**Non-family household**

Non-family households are formed when all the usual resident(s) do not fulfil any of the family relationships criteria, that is couple relationship, parent-child or other blood relationships.

This category includes lone person households and group households.

**Lone person household**

A lone person household may be formed by an individual aged 15 or over, either living alone or sharing his or her dwelling with others. This category refers to an individual who makes provision for his or her own food or other essentials for living, without combining with any other person to form part of a multi-person household.

**Group household**

A group household is a household consisting of two or more unrelated people where at least one person is aged 15 years or over. There are no reported couple relationships, parent-child relationships or other blood relationships in these households.

**Not classifiable**

A household where all members are either under 15 years of age or are visitors.

**Not classifiable (not further defined)**

This category is appropriate for collections which will not separately identify the types of other households.

**Visitor only dwelling**

All the members of this dwelling are visitors.

**Other not classifiable**

All of the members of this household are under 15 years of age.



## Appendix 2

### Concordance with previous Family Type classifications

The flexibility of the Family Type classification is augmented by the provision of a number of supplementary codes and labels representing useful aggregations of particular categories of the classification. These amalgamations of family types are designed specifically for output purposes and can be used to compare data produced using the family type standards with data from the 1991 Census of Population and Housing and the Survey of Families in Australia 1992.

#### Coding convention

The codes used at the highest level in the standard family type classification are:

- 1 Couple family with children
- 2 Couple family without children
- 3 One parent family
- 9 Other family

When designing the supplementary codes to be used in the concordance, it was necessary to use a new leading digit for the couple family as this 'new' category is an aggregation of two level one categories of the current classification. This aggregation is necessary because previous family classification aggregated *Couple*

*family with children* and *Couple family without children* at the highest level to form the single category of *Couple family*. The number 4 was chosen as it had not previously be used at the highest level of the classification code structure. Further down the hierarchy the numbers 1 & 2 are retained as they create unique numbers when combined with the leading 4.

It was not necessary to create a new leading digit for the supplementary codes for *One parent family*, thus the number 3 is retained. Further down the hierarchy the digits 1, 2, & 3 are replaced with a 5.

### Concordance between 1991 Census of Population & Housing and the ABS standard Family Type

1991 Census		Supplementary		Standard Family Type	
Code	Category	Code	Category	Code	Categories
ONE PARENT FAMILY					
1	with dependent offspring only	3522	One parent family with dependent children only  (aggregation of 3122, 3222, 3322)	3122	One parent family with children under 15, no non-dependent children and no other related individuals
				3222	One parent family with dependent students, no non-dependent children and no other related individuals
				3322	One parent family with children under 15, dependent students, no non-dependent children and no other related individuals
2	with dependent offspring and other rels only	3521	One parent family with dependent children, and other related individuals  (aggregation of 3121, 3221, 3321)	3121	One parent family with children under 15, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals
				3221	One parent family with dependent students, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals
				3321	One parent family with children under 15, dependent students, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals
3	with other offspring only			3412	One parent family with non-dependent children and no other related individuals
4	with other offspring and other rels only			3411	One parent family with non-dependent children and other related individuals

## Concordance between 1991 Census of Population & Housing and the ABS standard Family Type

1991 Census		Supplementary		Standard Family Type	
Code	Category	Code	Category	Code	Categories
ONE PARENT FAMILY					
5	with dependent and other offspring only	3512	One parent family with dependent children, and non-dependent children only	3112	One parent family with children under 15, non-dependent children and no other related individuals
			(aggregation of 3112, 3212, 3312)	3212	One parent family with dependent students, non-dependent children and no other related individuals
				3312	One parent family with children under 15, dependent students, non-dependent children and no other related individuals
6	with dependent and other offspring and other related individuals	3511	One parent family with dependent children, non-dependent children, and other related individuals	3111	One parent family with children under 15, non-dependent children and other related individuals
			(aggregation of 3111, 3211, 3311)	3211	One parent family with dependent students, non-dependent children and other related individuals
				3311	One parent family with children under 15, dependent students, non-dependent children and other related individuals
COUPLE - NO OFFSPRING					
7	Couple only			2422	Couple family without children and no other related individuals
8	Couple with other related individuals only			2421	Couple family without children and with other related individuals

## Concordance between 1991 Census of Population & Housing and the ABS standard Family Type

1991 Census		Supplementary		Standard Family Type	
Code	Category	Code	Category	Code	Categories
TWO PARENT FAMILY					
9	with dependent offspring only	4122	Couple family with dependent children only  (aggregation of 1122, 1222 and 1322)	1122	Couple family with children under 15, no non-dependent children and no other related individuals
				1222	Couple family with dependent students, no non-dependent children and no other related individuals
				1322	Couple family with children under 15, dependent students, no non-dependent children and no other related individuals
10	with dependent offspring and other related individuals only	4121	Couple family with dependent children, and other related individuals only  (aggregation of 1121, 1221 and 1321)	1121	Couple family with children under 15, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals
				1221	Couple family with dependent students, no non-dependent children with and other related individuals
				1321	Couple family with children under 15, dependent students, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals
11	with other offspring only			1412	Couple family with non-dependent children and no other related individuals
12	with other offspring and other related individuals only			1411	Couple family with non-dependent children and other related individuals

### Concordance between 1991 Census of Population & Housing and the ABS standard Family Type

1991 Census		Supplementary		Standard Family Type	
Code	Category	Code	Category	Code	Categories
TWO PARENT FAMILY					
13	with dependent and other offspring only	4112	Couple family with dependent children, and non-dependent children only	1112	Couple family with children under 15, non-dependent children and no other related individuals
			(aggregation of 1112, 1212 and 1312)	1212	Couple family with dependent students, non-dependent children and no other related individuals
				1312	Couple family with children under 15, dependent students, non-dependent children and no other related individuals
14	with dependent and other offspring and other related individuals	4111	Couple family with dependent children, non-dependent children and other related individuals	1111	Couple family with children under 15, non-dependent children and other related individuals
			(aggregation of 1111, 1211 and 1311)	1211	Couple family with dependent student, non-dependent children and other related individuals
				1311	Couple family with children under 15, dependent students, non-dependent children and other related individuals
OTHER					
15	other related individuals only			9429	Other family

## Concordance between Survey of Families in Australia, 1992 and the ABS standard Family Type

Family Survey	Supplementary	Standard Family Type
Category	Code Category	Code Categories
<b>COUPLE FAMILY</b>		
Couple		2422 Couple family without children and no other related individuals
Couple and dependent child(ren)	4122 Couple family with dependent children only  (aggregation of 1122, 1222 and 1322)	1122 Couple family with children under 15, no non-dependent children and no other related individuals  1222 Couple family with dependent students, no non-dependent children and no other related individuals  1322 Couple family with children under 15, dependent students, no non-dependent children and no other related individuals
Couple, dependent child(ren) and non-dependent child(ren)	4112 Couple family with dependent children, and non-dependent children only  (aggregation of 1112, 1212 and 1312)	1112 Couple family with children under 15, non-dependent children and no other related individuals  1212 Couple family with dependent students, non-dependent children and no other related individuals  1312 Couple family with children under 15, dependent students, non-dependent children and no other related individuals

## Concordance between Survey of Families in Australia, 1992 and the ABS standard Family Type

Family Survey	Supplementary	Standard Family Type
Category	Code Category	Code Categories
<b>COUPLE FAMILY</b>		
Couple, dependent child(ren), non-dependent child(ren), and related individuals	4111 Couple family with dependent children, non-dependent children, and other related individuals	1111 Couple family with children under 15, non-dependent children and other related individuals
		1211 Couple family with dependent students, non-dependent children and other related individuals
	(aggregation of 1111, 1211 and 1311)	1311 Couple family with children under 15, dependent students, non-dependent children and other related individuals
Couple, dependent child(ren) and related individuals	4121 Couple family with dependent children, and other related individuals only	1121 Couple family with children under 15, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals
		1221 Couple family with dependent students, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals
	(aggregation of 1121, 1221 and 1321)	1321 Couple family with children under 15, dependent students, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals
Couple and non-dependent child(ren)		1412 Couple family with non-dependent children and no other related individuals
Couple, non-dependent child(ren), and related individuals		1411 Couple family with non-dependent children and other related individuals
Couple and related individual(s)		2421 Couple family without children and with other related individuals



## Concordance between Survey of Families in Australia, 1992 and the ABS standard Family Type

Family Survey	Supplementary	Standard Family Type
Category	Code Category	Code Categories
<b>ONE PARENT FAMILY</b>		
Lone parent and dependent child(ren)	3522 One parent family with dependent children only  (aggregation of 3122, 3222, 3322)	3122 One parent family with children under 15, no non-dependent children and no other related individuals  3222 One parent family with dependent students, no non-dependent children and no other related individuals  3322 One parent family with children under 15, dependent students, no non-dependent children and no other related individuals
Lone parent, dependent child(ren) and non-dependent child(ren)	3512 One parent family with dependent children and non-dependent children only  (aggregation of 3112, 3212, 3312)	3112 One parent family with children under 15, non-dependent children and no other related individuals  3212 One parent family with dependent students, non-dependent children and no other related individuals  3312 One parent family with children under 15, dependent students, non-dependent children and no other related individuals
Lone parent, dependent child(ren), non-dependent child(ren) and related individual(s)	3511 One parent family with dependent children, non-dependent children and other related individuals  (aggregation of 3111, 3211, 3311)	3111 One parent family with children under 15, non-dependent children and other related individuals  3211 One parent family with dependent students, non-dependent children and other related individuals  3311 One parent family with children under 15, dependent students, non-dependent children and other related individuals

## Concordance between Survey of Families in Australia, 1992 and the ABS standard Family Type

Family Survey	Supplementary	Standard Family Type
Category	Code Category	Code Categories
<b>ONE PARENT FAMILY</b>		
Lone parent, dependent child(ren) and related individual(s)	3521 One parent family with dependent children, and other related individuals only  (aggregation of 3121, 3221, 3321)	3121 One parent family with children under 15, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals  3221 One parent family with dependent students, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals  3321 One parent family with children under 15, dependent students, no non-dependent children and with other related individuals
Lone parent and non-dependent child(ren)		3412 One parent family with non-dependent children and no other related individuals
Lone parent, non-dependent child(ren) and related individual(s)		3411 One parent family with non-dependent children and other related individuals
<b>OTHER</b>		
Related individuals		9429 Other family

## Appendix 3

### 1991 Census of Population and Housing questionnaire

Two pages of the questionnaire used in the 1991 Census of Population and Housing are included to provide an example of one of the recommended relationship questions to be used in a self-enumeration collection. For a complete discussion of these questions see Chapter 2 - *Relationship Questionnaire Modules*.

The reproduction of the Census questionnaire has been reduced from the original size and is a sample copy only.

Please complete one separate column for each person

**2 Name of each person including visitors who spent the night of Tuesday, 6 August 1991 in this household:**

- Record details for all adults, children, babies and visitors.
- Include any person who returned on Wednesday, 7 August 1991, without having been counted elsewhere.
- Enter the householder or any adult household member as 'Person 1' and if present, the spouse or partner as 'Person 2'.

**Person 1****Person 2**

Christian or given name

Christian or given name

Surname

Surname

**3 Sex**

- Mark one box for each person, for example ←

☐ Male☐ Male☐ Female☐ Female**4 Mark each person's age last birthday.**

- If age is less than one year, mark box ☐.
- Mark one box for each person. For example, for a person aged 31 years:

**Example**

Years:

☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 20 ☐ 30 ☐ 40 ☐ 50 ☐ 60 ☐ 70 ☐ 80  
☐ 1 ☐ 11 ☐ 21 ☐ 31 ☐ 41 ☐ 51 ☐ 61 ☐ 71 ☐ 81  
☐ 2 ☐ 12 ☐ 22 ☐ 32 ☐ 42 ☐ 52 ☐ 62 ☐ 72 ☐ 82  
☐ 3 ☐ 13 ☐ 23 ☐ 33 ☐ 43 ☐ 53 ☐ 63 ☐ 73 ☐ 83  
☐ 4 ☐ 14 ☐ 24 ☐ 34 ☐ 44 ☐ 54 ☐ 64 ☐ 74 ☐ 84  
☐ 5 ☐ 15 ☐ 25 ☐ 35 ☐ 45 ☐ 55 ☐ 65 ☐ 75 ☐ 85  
☐ 6 ☐ 16 ☐ 26 ☐ 36 ☐ 46 ☐ 56 ☐ 66 ☐ 76 ☐ 86  
☐ 7 ☐ 17 ☐ 27 ☐ 37 ☐ 47 ☐ 57 ☐ 67 ☐ 77 ☐ 87  
☐ 8 ☐ 18 ☐ 28 ☐ 38 ☐ 48 ☐ 58 ☐ 68 ☐ 78 ☐ 88  
☐ 9 ☐ 19 ☐ 29 ☐ 39 ☐ 49 ☐ 59 ☐ 69 ☐ 79 ☐ 89  
☐ 90 years or more

Years:

☐ 0 ☐ 10 ☐ 20 ☐ 30 ☐ 40 ☐ 50 ☐ 60 ☐ 70 ☐ 80  
☐ 1 ☐ 11 ☐ 21 ☐ 31 ☐ 41 ☐ 51 ☐ 61 ☐ 71 ☐ 81  
☐ 2 ☐ 12 ☐ 22 ☐ 32 ☐ 42 ☐ 52 ☐ 62 ☐ 72 ☐ 82  
☐ 3 ☐ 13 ☐ 23 ☐ 33 ☐ 43 ☐ 53 ☐ 63 ☐ 73 ☐ 83  
☐ 4 ☐ 14 ☐ 24 ☐ 34 ☐ 44 ☐ 54 ☐ 64 ☐ 74 ☐ 84  
☐ 5 ☐ 15 ☐ 25 ☐ 35 ☐ 45 ☐ 55 ☐ 65 ☐ 75 ☐ 85  
☐ 6 ☐ 16 ☐ 26 ☐ 36 ☐ 46 ☐ 56 ☐ 66 ☐ 76 ☐ 86  
☐ 7 ☐ 17 ☐ 27 ☐ 37 ☐ 47 ☐ 57 ☐ 67 ☐ 77 ☐ 87  
☐ 8 ☐ 18 ☐ 28 ☐ 38 ☐ 48 ☐ 58 ☐ 68 ☐ 78 ☐ 88  
☐ 9 ☐ 19 ☐ 29 ☐ 39 ☐ 49 ☐ 59 ☐ 69 ☐ 79 ☐ 89  
☐ 90 years or more —  
please specify

years

Years:

☐ 0 ☐ 10 ☐ 20 ☐ 30 ☐ 40 ☐ 50 ☐ 60 ☐ 70 ☐ 80  
☐ 1 ☐ 11 ☐ 21 ☐ 31 ☐ 41 ☐ 51 ☐ 61 ☐ 71 ☐ 81  
☐ 2 ☐ 12 ☐ 22 ☐ 32 ☐ 42 ☐ 52 ☐ 62 ☐ 72 ☐ 82  
☐ 3 ☐ 13 ☐ 23 ☐ 33 ☐ 43 ☐ 53 ☐ 63 ☐ 73 ☐ 83  
☐ 4 ☐ 14 ☐ 24 ☐ 34 ☐ 44 ☐ 54 ☐ 64 ☐ 74 ☐ 84  
☐ 5 ☐ 15 ☐ 25 ☐ 35 ☐ 45 ☐ 55 ☐ 65 ☐ 75 ☐ 85  
☐ 6 ☐ 16 ☐ 26 ☐ 36 ☐ 46 ☐ 56 ☐ 66 ☐ 76 ☐ 86  
☐ 7 ☐ 17 ☐ 27 ☐ 37 ☐ 47 ☐ 57 ☐ 67 ☐ 77 ☐ 87  
☐ 8 ☐ 18 ☐ 28 ☐ 38 ☐ 48 ☐ 58 ☐ 68 ☐ 78 ☐ 88  
☐ 9 ☐ 19 ☐ 29 ☐ 39 ☐ 49 ☐ 59 ☐ 69 ☐ 79 ☐ 89  
☐ 90 years or more —  
please specify

years

**5 What is each person's relationship to Person 1/Person 2?**

- Examples of other relationships: son-in-law, granddaughter, uncle, boarder.

**Person 1**

- ☐ Husband or wife of Person 1  
☐ De facto partner of Person 1  
☐ Child of Person 1  
☐ Stepchild of Person 1  
☐ Brother or sister of Person 1  
☐ Unrelated flatmate or co-tenant of Person 1  
☐ Other relationship to Person 1 — please specify

**6 What is each person's present marital status?**

- ☐ Never married  
☐ Married  
☐ Separated but not divorced  
☐ Divorced  
☐ Widowed

- ☐ Never married  
☐ Married  
☐ Separated but not divorced  
☐ Divorced  
☐ Widowed

*For a household with more than 6 persons, please contact the Census Collector.*

**Person 3****Person 4****Person 5****Person 6**

Christian or given name

Surname

Christian or given name

Surname

Christian or given name

Surname

Christian or given name

Surname

☐ Male  
☐ Female

☐ Male  
☐ Female

☐ Male  
☐ Female

☐ Male  
☐ Female

**Years:**

(0) (10) (20) (30) (40) (50) (60) (70) (80)  
 (1) (11) (21) (31) (41) (51) (61) (71) (81)  
 (2) (12) (22) (32) (42) (52) (62) (72) (82)  
 (3) (13) (23) (33) (43) (53) (63) (73) (83)  
 (4) (14) (24) (34) (44) (54) (64) (74) (84)  
 (5) (15) (25) (35) (45) (55) (65) (75) (85)  
 (6) (16) (26) (36) (46) (56) (66) (76) (86)  
 (7) (17) (27) (37) (47) (57) (67) (77) (87)  
 (8) (18) (28) (38) (48) (58) (68) (78) (88)  
 (9) (19) (29) (39) (49) (59) (69) (79) (89)

☐ 90 years or more —  
 please specify

years

**Years:**

(0) (10) (20) (30) (40) (50) (60) (70) (80)  
 (1) (11) (21) (31) (41) (51) (61) (71) (81)  
 (2) (12) (22) (32) (42) (52) (62) (72) (82)  
 (3) (13) (23) (33) (43) (53) (63) (73) (83)  
 (4) (14) (24) (34) (44) (54) (64) (74) (84)  
 (5) (15) (25) (35) (45) (55) (65) (75) (85)  
 (6) (16) (26) (36) (46) (56) (66) (76) (86)  
 (7) (17) (27) (37) (47) (57) (67) (77) (87)  
 (8) (18) (28) (38) (48) (58) (68) (78) (88)  
 (9) (19) (29) (39) (49) (59) (69) (79) (89)

☐ 90 years or more —  
 please specify

years

**Years:**

(0) (10) (20) (30) (40) (50) (60) (70) (80)  
 (1) (11) (21) (31) (41) (51) (61) (71) (81)  
 (2) (12) (22) (32) (42) (52) (62) (72) (82)  
 (3) (13) (23) (33) (43) (53) (63) (73) (83)  
 (4) (14) (24) (34) (44) (54) (64) (74) (84)  
 (5) (15) (25) (35) (45) (55) (65) (75) (85)  
 (6) (16) (26) (36) (46) (56) (66) (76) (86)  
 (7) (17) (27) (37) (47) (57) (67) (77) (87)  
 (8) (18) (28) (38) (48) (58) (68) (78) (88)  
 (9) (19) (29) (39) (49) (59) (69) (79) (89)

☐ 90 years or more —  
 please specify

years

**Years:**

(0) (10) (20) (30) (40) (50) (60) (70) (80)  
 (1) (11) (21) (31) (41) (51) (61) (71) (81)  
 (2) (12) (22) (32) (42) (52) (62) (72) (82)  
 (3) (13) (23) (33) (43) (53) (63) (73) (83)  
 (4) (14) (24) (34) (44) (54) (64) (74) (84)  
 (5) (15) (25) (35) (45) (55) (65) (75) (85)  
 (6) (16) (26) (36) (46) (56) (66) (76) (86)  
 (7) (17) (27) (37) (47) (57) (67) (77) (87)  
 (8) (18) (28) (38) (48) (58) (68) (78) (88)  
 (9) (19) (29) (39) (49) (59) (69) (79) (89)

☐ 90 years or more —  
 please specify

years

☐ Child of both Person 1  
 and Person 2  
☐ Child of Person 1 only  
☐ Child of Person 2 only  
☐ Brother or sister of Person 1  
☐ Unrelated flatmate or co-tenant  
 of Person 1  
☐ Other relationship to  
 Person 1 — please specify

☐ Child of both Person 1  
 and Person 2  
☐ Child of Person 1 only  
☐ Child of Person 2 only  
☐ Brother or sister of Person 1  
☐ Unrelated flatmate or co-tenant  
 of Person 1  
☐ Other relationship to  
 Person 1 — please specify

☐ Child of both Person 1  
 and Person 2  
☐ Child of Person 1 only  
☐ Child of Person 2 only  
☐ Brother or sister of Person 1  
☐ Unrelated flatmate or co-tenant  
 of Person 1  
☐ Other relationship to  
 Person 1 — please specify

☐ Child of both Person 1  
 and Person 2  
☐ Child of Person 1 only  
☐ Child of Person 2 only  
☐ Brother or sister of Person 1  
☐ Unrelated flatmate or co-tenant  
 of Person 1  
☐ Other relationship to  
 Person 1 — please specify

☐ Never married  
☐ Married  
☐ Separated but not divorced  
☐ Divorced  
☐ Widowed

☐ Never married  
☐ Married  
☐ Separated but not divorced  
☐ Divorced  
☐ Widowed

☐ Never married  
☐ Married  
☐ Separated but not divorced  
☐ Divorced  
☐ Widowed

☐ Never married  
☐ Married  
☐ Separated but not divorced  
☐ Divorced  
☐ Widowed



## Glossary

### **Blended family**

A couple family containing two or more children, of whom at least one is the natural, adopted or foster child of both members of the couple, and at least one is the step child of either member of the couple.

### **Boarder**

A person aged 15 years or over who is unrelated to any member of a household and who is supplied with meals and lodging in return for payment. Boarders are considered household members (due to the interaction with others at mealtimes), however, they are not considered family members due to the fact that they are unrelated to anyone in the household.

If the boarder is found to be related to any person in the household then this familial relationship takes precedence over the fact that the person is also a boarder.

### **Child**

A person of any age who is a natural, adopted, step, or foster son or daughter of a couple or lone parent, usually resident in the same household. A child is also any individual under 15, usually resident in the household, who forms a parent-child

relationship with another member in the household. This includes otherwise related children under 15 and unrelated children under 15.

In order to be classified as a child, the person can have no partner or child of his or her own usually resident in the household.

There are three types of child included in the Relationship in Household classification:

- Child under 15
- Dependent student
- Non-dependent child

### **Child dependency relationship**

There are two types of child dependency relationships. One is the relationship between a related or unrelated *child* aged less than 15 years and a nominal *parent* with whom he or she usually lives. The other is the relationship between a natural, adopted, step or foster child who is 15-24 years old, attending a secondary or tertiary education institution, and a nominal *parent* with whom she or he usually lives. The nominal *parent* must be over 15 years of age. This definition assumes that dependent children are not generally able to provide for themselves.

### **Child under 15**

A related or unrelated person under 15 years of age who forms a parent-child relationship with one person over 15 years of age resident in the household.

### **Coding**

The process of assigning classification codes to response data.

### **Consensual union**

Two people usually residing in the same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond usually associated with marriage and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union. This relationship is identified by the presence of a registered marriage or de facto marriage. In practice, a consensual union exists when the relationship between two people, of the opposite sex or same sex, usually resident in the same household is reported



as: husband, wife, spouse, partner, *de facto*, common law husband/wife/spouse, lover, boyfriend, girlfriend.

### **Couple family**

A family based on two persons who are in a registered or *de facto* marriage and who are usually resident in the same household. The family may include any number of dependents, non-dependents and other related individuals. It is not necessary for a parent-child relationship to be formed, thus a couple family can consist of a couple without children present in the household.

### **Couple family with children**

A couple family who have children present in the household. This family type category can be expanded to elaborate on the characteristics of those children, such as the type of dependent children present, or the presence of non-dependent children. At its most detailed level the category can also be used to indicate the presence of other related individuals.

### **Couple family without children**

A couple family with no dependent or non-dependent children present in the household. At its most detailed level the category can be used indicate the presence of relatives other than children.

### **Couple relationship**

A couple relationship is based on a consensual union, and is defined as two people usually residing in the same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond usually associated with marriage and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union. This relationship is identified by the presence of a registered marriage or *de facto* marriage.

### **Decree nisi**

The Macquarie Dictionary defines *decree nisi* as an interim document issued prior to a *decree absolute* and refers to the legal condition: "not coming into effect unless a person or persons fail to show cause against it within a certain time".

Persons granted a *decree nisi* are considered to be divorced for the purposes of the Registered Marital Status classification.

### **De facto marriage**

The relationship between two people who live together in a *consensual union* who are not registered as married to each other. In practice, a de facto marriage exists when the relationship between two people, of the opposite sex or same sex, usually resident in the same household is reported as: *partner, de facto or common law husband/wife/spouse, lover, boyfriend, girlfriend*; or when, for opposite-sex couples, their relationship is reported as husband/wife/spouse and the marital status of one or both partners is not reported as *registered married*.

### **Dependent child**

A dependent child is an individual who is either a *child under 15* or a *dependent student*, which is any child in a family under 15 years of age or aged 15-24 years, who is a full-time student. To be regarded as a child the individual can have no partner or child of his or her own usually resident in the household.

A dependent child must be attached to a nominal parent with whom she or he usually resides. This parent must be over 15 years of age.

### **Dependent student**

A natural, adopted, step, or foster child who is 15-24 years of age and who attends a secondary or tertiary educational institution as a full-time student and who has no partner or child of his or her own usually resident in the same household.

The definition of a child is more restrictive for the 15-24 age group in that otherwise related and unrelated persons in this age group are excluded from family coding.

### **Divorced**

A person who has formally ended his or her registered marriage by legal means and who has not remarried. Persons who have obtained a decree nisi are considered to be divorced.

### **Dwelling**

A suite of rooms within a building which is self-contained and intended for long term residential use. To be self-contained the suite of rooms must possess cooking and bathing facilities as part of the building.

**Ever married**

*Ever married* includes all persons whose registered marital status is other than *never married*.

**Family**

Two or more persons, one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering; and who are usually resident in the same household. The basis of a family is formed by identifying the presence of a couple relationship, lone parent-child relationship or other blood relationship. Some households will, therefore, contain more than one family.

**Family household with family members only present**

A household where every individual forms a familial relationship to one of the families belonging to the household. The definition of family member is limited to persons who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering, and who are usually resident in the same household.

A full list and explanation of accepted familial relationships is given in the rules for identifying and coding families in Chapter 4 - *Standards for Statistics on Family Type*, pp 43-47.

At a more detailed level the category may also be used to indicate the number of families (one, two, three or more), present within a given household. These families may, or may not, be related to each other. This level of detail is not differentiated by the classification. If such information is required, cross-classification with another variable is necessary.

**Family household with non-family members present**

A household which contains family members and at least one unrelated individual living with the family.

This category in the Household Type classification includes households which contain one family or multifamilies and is further differentiated on the number of families in the household. These families may, or may not, be related to each other. This level of detail is not differentiated by the classification. If such information is required, cross-classification with another variable is necessary.

### **Family number**

A code which identifies the person as a member of a particular family within the household. This is done for all persons in all family households, however, it is particularly relevant to people living in multifamily households. Separate families are treated as separate units by the Relationship in Household classification thus a family number is allocated to each person in the household indicating to which family that person belongs.

### **Family reference person**

A household member who forms a family with other members of the household and is, therefore, used as the basis for determining the familial relationships between the usual residents of the household. Familial relationships are defined in terms of the relationship between all other family members and the family reference person.

In a single family household, the *household reference person* and the *family reference person* are the same person. The reference person selection criteria are applied to all usual residents over 15 years from the top down until a single appropriate reference person is identified.

- one of the partners in a registered or de facto marriage, or
- a lone parent, or
- the person with the highest income, or
- the owner, purchaser or primary rent payer of the household accommodation, or
- the eldest person.

In multifamily households the identification of *family reference persons* allows each family living in a common household to be treated as a separate entity for the purpose of coding.

### **Family Type**

The differentiation of families based on the presence or absence of couple relationships, parent-child relationships, child dependency relationships or other blood relationships, in that order of preference.

**Foster child**

A person who lives with a person or persons who are not his or her natural, adoptive or step parent(s). The definition of foster child includes dependent and non-dependent children. If the foster child is no longer dependent, but still regards his or her relationship with appropriate members of the household, as a parent-child relationship, then he or she remains a foster child.

Operationally, a person is considered a foster child if the response 'foster' is given for that person, regardless of the individual's dependency status.

Previous ABS definitions of foster child have included a wider range of relationships, including formal and informal fostering. For example, the foster child may have been formally placed within the family by state family services, or the child may have formed a parent-child relationship through either of two dependency criteria. The current definition includes only formal fostering, as measured by the response given in the relationship question.

**Group household**

A household consisting of two or more unrelated people where all persons are aged 15 years or over. There are no reported couple relationships, parent-child relationships or other blood relationships in these households.

**Group household member**

A person who lives with at least one other unrelated individual and no family members.

**Household**

A group of two or more related or unrelated people who usually reside in the same dwelling, who regard themselves as a household and who make common provision for food or other essentials for living; or a person living in a dwelling who makes provision for his or her own food and other essentials for living without combining with any other person.

**Household reference person**

A household member whose relationship with all other members of the household may be described in terms which identify the composition of the household and are meaningful to family formation. The relationship between each individual and the household reference person is also a means of identifying

relationships between other members of the household, in order to further clarify household and family composition.

A standard hierarchic set of criteria is used to choose the most appropriate household member as the *household reference person*. In order to improve the quality, consistency and comparability of data it is preferable that the *household reference person* is aged 15 years or over and, in order of preference:

- one of the partners in a registered or defacto marriage, or
- a lone parent, or
- the person with the highest income, or
- the owner, purchaser or primary rent payer of the household accommodation, or
- the eldest person.

In a single family household, the *household reference person* and the *family reference person* are the same person. In a multifamily household, there is one *household reference person* (who is also the family reference person for the primary family) and a *family reference person* for each subsequent family.

### **Household Type**

The differentiation of households on the basis of the number of families present, the presence or absence of non-family members in family households, and the type of non-family households. The latter category provides for the identification of lone person households and group households.

### **Husband, wife or partner in a de facto marriage**

A person living with another person in a couple relationship. This relationship is not a registered marriage.

In practice, a person is defined as being a *Husband, wife or partner in a de facto marriage* when the relationship between two people, of the opposite sex or same sex, who live together in the same household is reported, in the relationship in household question, as: partner, de facto or common law husband / wife / spouse, lover, boyfriend, girlfriend; or when, for opposite sex couples, their relationship is reported as husband / wife / spouse and the marital status of one or both partners is not reported as registered married.

**Husband, wife or partner in a registered marriage**

A person living with another person in couple relationship. This relationship is a registered marriage.

In practice, a person is classified as being a *Husband, wife or partner in a registered marriage* if his or her relationship to another person (of the opposite sex), usually resident in the same household, is reported in the relationship in household question as husband, wife or spouse, and the registered marital status of both partners (if also asked in the collection) is reported as registered married. Under Australian law same-sex couples can not be registered as married and are therefore out of scope for this category.

**Lodger**

A person who lives in the rented quarters of a dwelling occupied by another person or family. A lodger is more independent than a boarder as there is no sharing of meals with other residents of the dwelling and, therefore, the lodger is considered to form a separate household within the dwelling. They are classified as a *lone person in the Relationship in Household* classification and thus form a *lone person household*.

**Lone ancestor**

An *other related individual* who is a Father/Mother or Grandfather/Grandmother. They are, thus, a usually resident parent or grandparent of a person in the household who has already formed a family relationship. To be identified as an *other related individual*, a person cannot have a spouse or partner usually resident in the household and cannot form a parent-child relationship with any *other related individual* in the household.

**Lone parent**

A person who has no spouse or partner present in the household but who forms a parent-child relationship with at least one dependent or non-dependent child usually resident in the household.

**Lone person**

A person who makes provision for his or her food and other essentials for living, without combining with any other person to form part of a multi-person household. He or she may live in a dwelling on their own or share a dwelling with another individual or family.

### **Lone person household**

A household comprised of an individual who makes provision for his or her own food and other essentials for living, without combining with any other person to form part of a multi-person household. A lone person household may be formed by an individual living either on their own or sharing his or her dwelling with others.

### **Married**

According to the concept of social marital status, the term *married* refers to the status of a person who is living with another person in either a registered marriage or a de facto marriage. According to the concept of registered marital status, the term *married* refers to the status of a person in a legally registered marriage, provided the person is not separated from his or her spouse, even if the spouse is not a usual resident of the same household. If there is any possibility of ambiguity, the term *registered married* is used in preference to *married* in relation to registered marital status.

### **Married in a de facto marriage**

A person who lives with another person in a couple relationship and to whom he or she is not in a registered marriage.

In practice, a de facto marriage exists when the relationship between two people, of the opposite sex or same sex, who live together in the same household is reported as: partner, de facto, or common law husband/wife/spouse; or when, for opposite-sex couples, their relationship is reported as husband/wife/spouse and the registered marital status of one or both partners (if also asked in the collection) is reported as a category other than registered married.

### **Married in a registered marriage**

A person who lives with another person in a couple relationship and to whom he or she is legally registered as married.

In practice, a person is classified as being a partner in a registered marriage if his or her relationship to a person of the opposite sex, who usually lives in the same household, is reported as: husband, wife or spouse, and the registered marital status of both partners (if also asked in the collection) is reported as registered married. Under Australian law same-sex couples can not be registered as married and are therefore out of scope of this category.



**Multifamily household**

A household where more than one family has been identified, based on the presence of a combination of, or more than one of, the following relationships: couple relationship, lone parent-child relationship, or other blood relationship.

**Never married**

A person who has never been a partner in a registered marriage.

**Non-dependent child**

A natural, step, adopted or foster child of a couple or lone parent usually resident in the household, aged over 15 years and who is not a full-time student aged 15-24 years, and who has no partner or child of his or her own usually resident in the household.

**Non-family household**

Households whose usual resident(s) do not fulfil any of the family relationships criteria; that is couple relationship, parent-child or other blood relationships.

A non-family household can be either a person living alone or a group household.

**Non-family member**

A person who does not fulfil any of the family criteria of couple relationship, parent-child relationship or other blood relationship with any of the usual residents of the household. They may live within a family household or they may form a non-family household either as a lone person or a group household.

A non-family member is a person who is one of the following:

- a lone person;
- a group household member; or
- an unrelated individual living in a family household.

**Not married**

The term *not married* is used primarily in relation to social marital status and refers to a person who is not living with another person in either a registered marriage or a de facto marriage. This includes persons who live alone, with other

family members, and those in shared accommodation; it also includes persons who are in a registered marriage or in a de facto marriage, but whose partners are not usually resident in the household.

When the term *not married* is used in the context of registered marital status, it refers to persons whose registered marital status is *never married*, *widowed* or *divorced* and also includes those who are living with a de facto partner, and must be footnoted as such.

In the context of registered marital status, the term *not registered married* is generally used in preference to *not married*.

#### **Not registered married**

A person who is currently not a partner in a registered marriage.

It should be noted that this term relates to persons whose registered marital status is reported as *never married*, *widowed* or *divorced* and that the use of this term is preferable, in the context of registered marital status, to the term *not married*.

#### **One parent family**

A family consisting of a lone parent with at least one dependent or non-dependent child (regardless of age) who is also usually resident in the household. The family may also include any number of other dependent children, non-dependent children and other related individuals.

Examples of one parent families include:

- a 25-year-old parent with dependent children; and
- a 80-year-old parent living with a 50-year-old child.

#### **Opposite-sex couple**

Two persons of the opposite sex who are usually resident in the same household and who form a consensual union.

#### **Other blood relationship**

A relationship between individuals related by blood or by marriage who are not in a couple or a parent-child relationship.

There is no numerical limit to the members of a family who can be considered as being related to the family reference person by direct lineage, that is, from generation to generation. Grandmothers, great-grandmothers and even great-great-grandmothers, for example, are all considered as being related to the family reference person. Similarly, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren are also considered as being related to the family reference person.

The definition is more restrictive, however, when the family structure is considered horizontally. The Family Type classification does not consider any relation beyond the first cousin as being an *other blood relationship* of the family reference person. A list of the familial relationships that fall within the scope of an *other blood relationship* is given in Chapter 4 - *Standards for Statistics on Family Type*, p46.

### **Other family**

A family of *other related individuals* residing in the same household. These individuals do not form a couple or parent-child relationship with any other person in the household and are not attached to a couple or one parent family in the household.

If two brothers, for example, are living together and neither is a spouse, a lone parent or a child, then they are classified as an other family. However, if the two brothers share the household with the daughter of one of the brothers and her husband, then both brothers are classified as *other related individuals* and are attached to the couple family.

### **Other household**

A household where all members are under 15 years of age or all members are visitors.

### **Other related individual**

An individual who is related to members of the household, but who does not form a couple relationship or parent-child relationship according to the priority rules of family coding. He or she can be related through blood, step and in-law relationships and include any **direct** ancestors or descendants. Relatives beyond first cousin are excluded.

*Other related individuals* can form their own family type or can be attached to an already existing family. Those related individuals who reside in the same

household and who do not form a couple or parent-child relationship with any other person in the household are classified as an *other family*

In cases where a couple family or one parent family has been formed, any persons who are related to members of these families and are usual residents of the household are *other related individuals*. In these circumstances they can be identified at the detailed level of the Family Type classification.

### **Parent**

A natural, step, adoptive or foster mother or father of a child usually resident in the same household.

### **Parent-child relationship**

A relationship between two persons usually resident in the same household. The nominal *child* is attached to the nominal *parent* via a natural, adoptive, step, foster or child dependency relationship.

### **Partner**

A person in a couple relationship with another person usually resident in the same household. The couple relationship may be in either a registered or de facto marriage and includes same-sex couples.

### **Partner in a registered marriage**

*See the definition of Husband, wife or partner in a registered marriage.*

### **Registered marital status**

An individual's current status in regard to a registered marriage, ie. whether he or she is widowed, divorced, separated, married or never married. The partners in a registered marriage must be of the opposite sex as same-sex relationships cannot be registered as marriages in Australia.

### **Registered marriage**

A marriage between two people, usually resident in the same household, that has been registered and for which they hold a marriage certificate.

**Related individuals**

See *Other related individuals*

**Relationship in Household**

The description of the familial or non-familial relationship of each person in a household to the *household* or *family reference person*.

**Same-sex couple**

Two persons of the same sex who form a consensual union and are usually resident in the same household.

**Separated**

A person who is a partner in a registered marriage, but has parted from his or her spouse, is unlikely to re-unite with him or her, and has not yet divorced.

**Social marital status**

*Social marital status* is the relationship status of an individual with reference to another person who is usually resident in the household. A marriage exists when two people live together as husband and wife, or partners, regardless of whether the marriage is formalised through registration. Individuals are, therefore, regarded as married if they are in a de facto marriage, or if they are living with the person to whom they are registered as married.

**Step-child**

A step-son or step-daughter to either of the partners in a couple family or the step-son or step-daughter of the lone parent in a one-parent family.

**Step family**

A couple family containing one or more children, none of whom is the natural, adopted or foster child of both members of the couple, and at least one of whom is the step child of either member of the couple.

### **Type of couple**

A code used to classify the type of couple based on the sex of the partners in a couple relationship; ie. whether opposite sex couple or same sex couple.

### **Unrelated individual living in a family household**

A person who lives in a family household, who is not related to any person in any of the families in the household, but who shares meals with a family. A boarder fits into this category.

### **Usual resident**

A person who regards the dwelling in which he or she lives as their only or main home. To be a usual resident, instead of a visitor, that individual must be resident in their dwelling for a particular period of time.

At present, the time component of this term (ie. the period of time a person is required to be living in a particular household before they are considered a usual resident) varies according to the needs of individual collections.

Standards for statistics on usual residency are currently being developed. These standards will seek to make the definition of a usual resident the same across all ABS collections. In the interim period the ABS recommends the following definition of a usual resident:

*a person who usually has lived or intends to live with the household for a total of six months or more and regards it as his or her own, or main, household; or a person who has no usual place of residence and is staying with the household during the reference period of the collection.*

### **Usual residence**

The address at which a person has lived or intends to live for a given period of time.

At present, the time component of this term (ie. the period of time a person is required to be living at a particular address before it is considered to be his or her usual residence) varies according to the needs of individual collections.

Standards for statistics on usual residency are currently being developed. These standards will seek to make the definition of a usual residence the same across all ABS collections. In the interim, the ABS recommends that a period of six months be used to determine if the place of residence is a usual residence. If the person

has no usual place of residence, then the address at which they are staying during the reference period of the collection is regarded as their usual residence.

**Visitors**

Visitors are within the scope of the Relationship in Household classification and are assigned a separate category, but they are, by definition, excluded from family coding. The distinction between visitors and usual residents is made in the Relationships in Household classification to ensure that families comprise only those persons usually resident in the same household.

**Widowed**

A person whose spouse in a registered marriage has died and who has not remarried.





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Australia's Families: Selected findings from the Survey of Families in Australia 1992, Canberra, 1993 (ABS Catalogue No. 4418.0)

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### **Economic Commission for Europe**

Recommendations for the 1990 Censuses of Population and Housing in the ECE Region, 1990, (15-16, 55).

### **Macquarie University**

The Macquarie Dictionary, Macquarie Library, 1989.

### **National Council for the International Year of the Family**

Creating the Links: Families and Social Responsibility (Advance Release), Canberra, 1994

## General Information

### Comments

Comments about these and other ABS standards are invited from all agencies and individuals. They should be addressed to The Director, *Classifications, Standards and Output Processing Section*, PO Box 10, Belconnen, ACT 2616.

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Standards for social, labour and demographic statistics are developed by the *Classifications, Standards and Output Processing Section*. Other publications in the series that are, or will be, available include:

- ☐ Standards for Statistics on Age and Sex  
(Cat. No. 1285.0) published 1993
- ☐ Standards for Statistics on Income  
(Cat. No. 1287.0)
- ☐ Standards for Statistics on Core Labour Force Variables (Cat. No. 1288.0)

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